

THE CONCEPT OF CHARACTER IN THE  
MAJOR NOVELS OF D. H. LAWRENCE

By

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A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Council  
of the University of Florida  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
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In order to create the new kind of novel seen in The Rainbow and Women in Love, D. H. Lawrence developed a new kind of character, "another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through . . . allotropic states." This study attempts to trace the development of that new form of character from its germination in Sons and Lovers and development in The Rainbow to its culmination in Women in Love.

The Study of Thomas Hardy (1914) provides an expository commentary on Lawrence's primary interest in character and in the primal, cosmic forces which motivate and govern character. Focusing on the Study, the first chapter of my dissertation outlines the central principles of Lawrence's theory of aesthetics, particularly those related to character.

But the Study not only provides a set of literary principles from which Lawrence takes his departure in The Rainbow and Women in Love; it is also an indirect commentary on Sons and Lovers. In the second chapter, then, I use Lawrence's criticism of Hardy to reveal the central indebtedness of that novel to Hardy's Jude the Obscure. The characters of Sons and Lovers are apparently adopted from Thomas Hardy and adapted to Lawrence's personal world view. There is a sense in which Lawrence rewrites Hardy to his own satisfaction, as a close analysis of the Study and Sons and Lovers makes clear.

Chapters III and IV deal with the characters of The Rainbow and Women in Love, respectively. These characters grow out of the character types established in Sons and Lovers, and develop along the lines established in the Hardy Study. While there is a continual modification and reworking of these types, there is nonetheless a pattern of philosophical and aesthetic development which culminates in the typed, "fated" characters of Women in Love. Lawrence is seen to employ character types from other Hardy novels, from mythic characters and analogues, and from his own previous works. Often several opposing types are combined in one character (such as Gerald Critch, who is both Dionysus and Apollo), in order to dramatize the internal conflicts of the character. The psychic disposition of a character has always, for Lawrence, profound implications not only

for the fate of the individual, but for the future of society as well. Defining these implications is the major interpretative burden of this dissertation.

Chapter V examines Lawrence's demise as a major novelist after Women in Love, and finds the chief problem of the later novels to lie in the author's inability to allow character to rise above its metaphysical, or allegorical, burden. Ironically, the very failures of art Lawrence sees in Hardy and Tolstoi in the Study prove his own downfall as well.

## CHAPTER I

### THE STUDY OF THOMAS HARDY: LITERARY PRINCIPLES

I have been, and I have returned.  
I have mounted up on the wings of the morning,  
and I have dredged down to the  
zenith's reversal.  
Which is my way, being man.  
God may stay in mid-heaven, the Son of Man  
has climbed to the Whitsun zenith,  
But I, Matthew, being a man  
Am a traveller back and forth.

So be it.

D. H. Lawrence, St. Matthew

"The state does not want to be; it wants  
to survive."

John Fowles, The Aristos

In the essay "Surgery for the Novel -- or a Bomb," first published in April, 1923,<sup>1</sup> D. H. Lawrence proclaimed the function and mode of the new novel. The new direction of fiction should not adopt the "absorbedly self-conscious, senile-precocious" form of Joyce and Proust. Lawrence called for a return to the form of the Platonic Dialogues, to a combination of fiction and metaphysic, and this return required for Lawrence a new conception of character. The recombination of art and philosophy should be effected in order to "present us with new, really new feelings, a

whole line of new emotion, which will get us out of the emotional rut":

It seems to me it was the greatest pity in the world, when fiction and philosophy got split. They used to be one, right from the days of myth. Then they went and parted, like a nagging married couple, with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and that beastly Kant. So the novel went sloppy, and philosophy went abstract-dry. The two should come together again -- in the novel.

In the Study of Thomas Hardy, the central formulation of the Laurentian metaphysic, the same directions for the novel are outlined:

It is the novelists and dramatists who have the hardest task in reconciling their metaphysic, their theory of being and knowing, with their living sense of being. Because a novel is a microcosm, and because man in viewing the universe must view it in light of a theory, therefore every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic.<sup>2</sup>

The concluding sentences of the paragraph are crucial: "But the metaphysic must always subserve the artistic purpose beyond the artist's conscious aim. Otherwise the novel becomes a treatise." Lawrence's "most pretentious critical work," as Edward McDonald calls the Study of Thomas Hardy, is not only an attempt to formulate a philosophy of "being and knowing," it is also Lawrence's effort to work out his own literary principles of the novel, to articulate how the novel works, or should work. Lawrence is, above all, an artist; and the effort to construct

a metaphysical system is at all times a prolegomena to the construction of an artistic base for his fiction. The entire Study, running to 118 pages in the Phoenix, leads to a conceptual framework of what the "supreme art" will be and, more importantly, how that art will be generated in the novel.

The Study's focus on character is evident from Lawrence's first mention of it in a letter written on July 15, 1914, to Edward Marsh: "I am going to write a little book on Hardy's people."<sup>3</sup> The Study of Thomas Hardy is, as Lawrence himself wrote to J. B. Pinker on September 5th, "about anything but Thomas Hardy."<sup>4</sup> It will, in fact, be primarily about Lawrence, as he admits to Amy Lowell in a letter of November 18th: "I am finishing a book, supposed to be on Thomas Hardy, but in reality a sort of Confession of my Heart."<sup>5</sup> The initial center of concentration, however, is maintained throughout the Study. Whenever the art of Hardy is considered (in three of the Study's ten chapters), the focus rests squarely on "Hardy's people," on character. Calling Eustacia and Clym or Tess and Jude "people" rather than characters is natural for Lawrence, and indicative of his esthetic principles: Lawrence does not make sharp distinctions between the laws of life and those of art. For Lawrence, art is art because it provides vantage points from which to view life, vantage points which are inaccessible in real life. This is the

implication of Lawrence's vindictive comments on the "unreasonable things"<sup>6</sup> that Hardy's characters do.

Throughout his work, Lawrence had a conviction that the novel could do what it has never done in the past. He believed that the novel could be both a prophetic book and a testing ground for metaphysical hypotheses. Thus in the famous ninth chapter of Lady Chatterley's Lover, he says that "here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead." In a sense the novel is a laboratory in which the artist works out the possibilities of human life through his characters.

At the center of the Study, then, is character, in both the metaphysical and literary concerns of the essay. As Lawrence's most exhaustive essay on this subject, the Study must be recognized as a most important aid to understanding Lawrence's developing concept of character. Furthermore, the proximity of the composition of the Study to Lawrence's major novels makes the comments of the former particularly pertinent to the latter. As George H. Ford has said, "it is commonly noted that Lawrence's descriptions of English landscape resemble those of Hardy, yet the real affinity is a more significant one. In his perceptive (although garrulous) essay on his much admired predecessor, Lawrence's analysis of Hardy's view of human

relationships often seems to be an analysis of his own novels. . . . What he said of Hardy's heroes and heroines applies even more fittingly to his own.<sup>7</sup> What I shall argue in this study, however, is not that the Study of Thomas Hardy presents the precise critical formulations about character which The Rainbow and Women in Love make manifest in art; rather, that the Study should be regarded as a most helpful background for an understanding of Lawrence's unique "people" in those novels. It will become evident that the theories of the expository Study are modified and reformulated in the imaginative art of the novels. Quite simply, I will argue that the Study of Thomas Hardy (1914) is, at least in part, an indirect commentary on the characters of Sons and Lovers (1913), and that an understanding of the essay is most helpful for an understanding of that novel. Furthermore, the characters of The Rainbow seem to grow out of Sons and Lovers while also bearing evidence of Hardian ancestry. As "a potential sequel to The Rainbow," Women in Love repeats this pattern of reworking old characters to develop new ones, and in this novel the long-sought balance of fiction and metaphysic is achieved in a new kind of character. An awareness of this process of modification will increase our understanding of all of Lawrence's characters.

Before passing on to an examination of precisely what it is that Lawrence sees in Hardy's characters, and the implicative principles which Lawrence affirms, a good deal of another letter should be quoted. This letter, which is concerned with the same problems central to the Study of Thomas Hardy, has become perhaps the most important letter Lawrence ever wrote, offering, as it does, suggestive comments for understanding what is new in Lawrence's best novels of new form: The Rainbow and Women in Love. Written one month before the Study was begun, the letter is a defense of Lawrence's "attitude to my characters" in The Wedding Ring, the name for the intermediate novel between the manuscripts of The Sisters and the finished versions of The Rainbow and its sequel, Women in Love. The letter was written to Edward Garnett, and is dated June 5, 1914. The necessity for such lengthy quotation will, I trust, become evident:

I don't agree with you about The Wedding Ring. . . . I don't think the psychology is wrong: it is only that I have a different attitude to my characters, and that necessitates a different attitude in you, which you are not prepared to give. . . . When I read Marinetti -- 'the profound intuitions of life added one to the other, word by word, according to their illogical conception, will give us the general lines of an intuitive physiology of matter' -- I see something of what I am after. . . . I don't care about the physiology of matter -- but somehow -- that which is physic -- non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element -- which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. The certain moral scheme is what I object to.

In Turgencv, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoevsky, the moral scheme into which all the characters fit -- and it is nearly the same scheme -- is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead . . . it is the inhuman will, call it physiology, or like Marinetti -- physiology of matter, that fascinates me. I don't so much care about what the woman feels -- in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care about what the woman is -- what she IS -- inhumanly, physiologically, materially -- according to the use of the word: but for me, what she is as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater, inhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception. . . . You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego -- of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond -- but I say, 'Diamond, what! This is carbon.' And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.). . . . Again I say, don't look for the development of the novel to follow the lines of certain characters: the characters fall into the form of some other rhythmic form, as when one draws a fiddle-bow across a fine tray delicately sanded, the sand takes lines unknown.<sup>3</sup>

In the postscript, Lawrence adds: "Please keep this letter, because I want to write on futurism and it will help me."<sup>8</sup>

The letter is quoted at such length because it sounds all the themes and presents all the problems to which this thesis addresses itself: the delineation of Lawrence's concepts of character in both principle and practice.

There is a sense in which my entire inquiry into Lawrence's concept of character may be seen as an attempt to decipher the meaning of this letter. With the qualified exception of Mark Schorer, no critic has yet elucidated the issues voiced in this letter, which George H. Ford calls "frequently quoted but rarely explained,"<sup>9</sup> and which Harry T. Moore names "Lawrence's manifesto."<sup>10</sup>

## II

The first two chapters of the Study are groundwork, a fanciful prologue to the study of Hardy. The first chapter is called "The Beginning of the Argument," and the second is "Still Introductory." In a tone reminiscent of the narrator of Tom Jones, Lawrence ranges over a wide variety of subjects in an almost playful manner, talking of poppies and phoenixes and cave men, Dido and Christ, women's suffrage, laws, war, and the poor. The "structural skeleton," however, with which he will examine Hardy's novels and inform his own, is already being built. "The most striking feature of Lawrence's weltanschauung is its dualism," says H. M. Daleski in The Forked Flame,<sup>11</sup> and this is certainly the structural method by which the entire Study proceeds from the outset.

"The systole of man's heartbeat," says Lawrence in the opening paragraph of the Study, "his strenuous purpose, unremitting," is self-preservation -- "which has at length

become overblown and extravagant." Opposing and contradicting "this unappeased rage of self-preservation," however, "the diastole of the heartbeat"<sup>12</sup> is toward procreation and artistic creation (activities which, for Lawrence, involve the same energies). From this capital duality outlined in the first two paragraphs of the Study, all others follow: machine v. man, working v. living, existing v. being, and female v. male.

To dramatize such polarities, Lawrence uses symbols and parables rather than systematic analysis. Thus the ant and the grasshopper, the "ancient paleolithic man" and his educated grandson, the poppy and the cabbage all serve to present the dualistic conflict and to symbolize an abstraction. The favorite system of metaphor, however, is that of the life process of the flower. People concerned solely with self-preservation (as most people are), live "without ever bursting the bud, the tight economical bud of caution and thrift and self-preservation" (401); but "the final aim [of life] is the flower . . . the magical spurt of being . . . into fullness of self" (403).\*

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\*Cf. Lawrence's "A Plan" (Collected Poems, p. 524):

All I care about in a man  
is that unbroken spark in him  
where he is himself  
undauntedly.

All the problems of Europe, Lawrence proposes, arise from the failure of the people to assert their own unique individuality of self (406). "The earnest people of today serve at the old, second-rate altar of self-preservation" (404), and for these people, immured in society, convention, and work, only passing time ("the tick-tock of birth and death") is eternal. For the phoenix, the poppy, and the true individual, only the self is eternal.\* The war, for example (and here Lawrence is talking expressly about World War I), is being waged because man will embrace no other way of manifesting his desire to break out of the prison of security, caution, self-love, and self-preservation. Man is afraid to risk a rebellion to live, he "can only die. . . . And this is the only good that can result from the 'world disaster'" that we realize once more that self-preservation is not the final goal of life. . . . That will free us, perhaps, from our crazed desire to live "under the shelter of the social frame" (407). The war

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\*Cf. Lawrence's remarks in the Preface to the American Edition of New Poems (1920): "Life, the ever-present, knows no finality, no finished crystallisation. The perfect rose is only a running flame, emerging and flowing off, and never in any sense at rest, static, finished. . . . Give me the still, white seething, the incandescence and the coldness of the incarnate moment: the moment, the quick of all change and haste and opposition: the moment, the immediate present, the Now."

may give us, Lawrence hopes, "some new courage to let go the securities, and to be" (408).\*

Most men foolishly view themselves as an economic object, as a "moneyed or unmoneyed thing." But "neither money or non-money matters supremely"; what matters is the fire and color of the poppy, the light of the self creating the self into being. This essential spark of the self is the alternative to the desire for self-preservation, and by this spark alone is a man truly able to live his life: "like a poppy that has come to bud . . . when [a man] has traversed his known and come to the beach to meet the unknown, he must strip himself naked and plunge in . . . if he dare" (409). This is, of course, the Kierkegaardian

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\*Cf. "Manifesto," pt. VI: "To be, or not to be, is still the question./This ache for being is the ultimate hunger," Collected Poems, p. 265.

Also cf. Lawrence's letter of January 17, 1913, to Ernest Collings, Letters, ed. Huxley, p. 93: "We have forgotten ourselves. We are Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. We cannot be. 'To be or not to be' -- it is the question with us now, by Jove. And nearly every Englishman says 'Not to be.' So he goes in for Humanitarianism and suchlike forms of not-being. The real way of living is to answer to one's wants. Not 'I want to light up with my intelligence as many things as possible' but 'For the living of my full flame -- I want that liberty, I want that woman, I want that pound of peaches, I want to go to sleep, I want to go to the pub and have a good time, I want to look a beastly swell today, I want to kiss that girl, I want to insult that man.' Instead of that, all these wants, which are there whether-or-not, are utterly ignored, and we talk about some sort of ideas. I'm like Carlyle, who, they say, wrote 50 volumes on the value of silence."

leap of faith into the existential abyss, and it is the supreme moment by which all men are judged in the Laurentian metaphysic.

In this rather unusual determination of the possibilities for good in war, Lawrence hits the ethical and ontological nerve of the twentieth century. In The Courage to Be, Paul Tillich finds Socrates' inability to define courage in the Platonic dialogue Laches more important than most of the apparently more successful definitions of courage (including those of Plato himself, and of Aristotle). "An understanding of courage," says Tillich, "presupposes an understanding of man and of his world, its structures and values. . . . Courage can show us what being is, and being can show us what courage is."<sup>13</sup> Tillich goes on to define the courage to be in terms that both locate Lawrence in the mainstream of contemporary theology and isolate what must be considered Lawrence's ethical imperative: "The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation."<sup>14</sup>

Despite Lawrence's later reading of the Greek and Roman philosophers (at the behest of Bertrand Russell), neither in the Study nor in any of the later works does he affirm the Stoic concepts of courage or being, which Tillich formulates as "the courage to affirm one's own reasonable nature over against what is accidental in us . . . , the courage to

affirm our own rational nature."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it is precisely in "what is accidental in us" that Lawrence glories, with much the same zeal as Gerard Manley Hopkins in a poem like "Pied Beauty," in which the poet praises God for

All things counter, original spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet; sour; adazzle, dim.

In the context of Tillich's discussion of the contrast in the valuation of the individual in the ancient and modern attitudes, Lawrence's position would seem to be that of a modern extremist: "While the ancient world valued the individual not as an individual but as a representative of something universal, e.g., a virtue, the rebirth of antiquity saw in the individual as an individual a unique expression of the universe, incomparable, irreplaceable, and of infinite significance."<sup>16</sup>

And yet Lawrence does not fit into the tradition of modern Western philosophy, with respect to the ontology of courage, as Tillich defines it. Both Spinoza and Nietzsche, regarded by Tillich as the central philosophers of being in our culture,<sup>17</sup> agree that the central activity of life is self-affirmation, but neither distinguishes between the self-affirming and self-preserving impulses or activities, a distinction central to the Laurentian dualism. Indeed, the central problems of character and value in Lawrence build upon the conflict between the self-preserving and the self-fulfilling forces, between the ego and the self.

## III

This primary duality of self-preservation vs. self-fulfillment having been constructed, Lawrence begins the third chapter of the Study by asserting what must have been his own basic motivation for writing a book "about Hardy's people". "One thing about them," he says, "is that none of the heroes and heroines care very much for money, or immediate self-preservation, and all of them are struggling hard to come into being.". This struggle consists primarily in "the struggle into love and the struggle with love. . . . The via media to being . . . is love, and love alone" (410). The struggle of love is the sole artistic concern:

Having achieved and accomplished love, then the man passes into the unknown. He has become himself, his tale is told. Of anything that is complete there is no more tale to tell. The tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete (410).

The conflict in Hardy's novels, then, stems from the confrontation of "unreasonable" and explosive characters (who "are always bursting suddenly out of bud and taking a wild flight into flower"), with "the great self-preservation scheme . . . which is formulated in the state, in the whole modelling of the community" (411). Hardy's characters are unpredictable and unusual because they are all trying to be, trying to break "out of a tight convention . . . to live outside in the precarious open." But "from such an outburst the tragedy usually develops," because none of the heroes or heroines can free themselves entirely from the community

which imprisons "his natural, individual desire" to fulfill his own unique self. This conflict between the scheme of self-preservation and the desire for self-fulfillment, says Lawrence, "is the one theme of the Wessex novels" (412).

Lawrence records his quite personalized reaction to the first five novels (Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes, Far from the Madding Crowd, and The Hand of Othelberta) with a short paragraph about each. About The Return of the Native, however, Lawrence says "this is the first tragic and important novel" (413). In this novel, all the characters bent firmly on self-realization (Eustacia, Clym's mother) are destroyed by social convention. Clym, who is "not able to undertake his own soul," denies his own individual drives and identifies himself with society. Wildeve "had no positive being. He is an eternal assumption" (414).

The "real sense of tragedy," however, comes from Egdon Heath. The "real spirits of the Heath," says Lawrence, are Eustacia, Clym's mother, and Wildeve: "the natives have little or nothing in common with the place" (415). The Heath is the center and progenitor of "instinctive life," ". . . organic as the body of a beast." Egdon Heath is not important to Lawrence as a particular place, but as a real and symbolic force working in the novel, a force which informs the will to self-fulfillment and self-realization and which is at its very roots opposed to any scheme of societal

conventions. Furthermore, the Heath is eternal, as societies and individuals are not:

Out of the body of this crude earth are born Eustacia, Wildeve, Mistress Yeobright, Clym, and all the others. They are one year's accidental crop.

Here is the deep, black source from whence all these little contents of lives are drawn. And the contents of the small lives are spilled and washed. There is savage satisfaction in it: for so much more remains to come, such a black, powerful fecundity is working there that what does it matter? (415).

This year's accidental crop of characters is unable to fulfill its nature. Eustacia mistakes her image of Paris for the real thing: "But Paris real was not Eustacia's imagined Paris. Where was her imagined Paris, the place where her powerful nature could come to blossom? Beside some strong-passioned, unconfined man, her mate" (416). Clym, who could have been this mate, is unable to burst into his real self, and must identify himself with the societal system. Clym is "impotent to be"; he is unable to produce anything "original in being or in act, and certainly no original thought" (417). Lawrence quotes Hardy's description of the embattled Clym, a description which images Clym's imprisoned self or being: "As is usual with bright natures, the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcass shone out of him like a ray." Lawrence sees the mind as the real prison, guarded by the will, confining the blood, "which rose dark and potent out of Egdon." Clym has been

educated above his roots in Egdon Heath. He has lost his connection with the elemental forces of life and, in the course of the novel, allows himself to be swallowed up by a system of ideas and conventions which is itself only an accidental crop of the Heath: "He had identified himself with the system, and he could not extricate himself" (418). Clym is foolish and blind because he does not recognize Egdon, "the primal impulsive body, . . . the great reality"; he is a failure because he does not recognize and cannot come to terms with "the primal impulses that rise in him," and that arise from the Heath itself.

Lawrence's central focus, in this novel, then, is Egdon Heath and the characters who grow out of the Heath. Lawrence seems to be most intrigued by Hardy's system of nature and his manipulation of the lives within that system:

This is a constant revelation in Hardy's novels: that there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it. Against the background of dark, passionate Egdon, of the leafy, sappy passion and sentiment of the woodlands, of the unfathomed stars, is drawn the lesser scheme of lives: The Return of the Native, The Woodlanders, or Two on a Tower. Upon the vast, incomprehensible pattern of some primal morality greater than ever the human mind can grasp, is drawn the little, pathetic pattern of man's moral life and struggle, pathetic, almost ridiculous. The little fold of law and order, the little walled city within which man has to defend himself from the waste enormity of nature, becomes always too small, and the pioneers venturing out with the code of the walled city upon them, die in the bonds of that code, free and yet unfree, preaching the walled city and looking to the waste.

This is the wonder of Hardy's novels, and gives them their beauty. The vast, unexplored morality of life itself, what we call the immorality of nature, surrounds us in its eternal incomprehensibility, and in its midst goes on the little human morality play (419).

John Holloway, in The Victorian Sage, would seem to agree with Lawrence's remarks on the primal forces of nature in Hardy's world:

'Nature' for Hardy is scarcely picturesque, clearly not static, and above all not a back-cloth. It is the working and changing system of the whole world -- Nature in the older sense of Chaucer or Spenser or Pope (for they had one sense in common), though with a detailed knowledge of its operations which none of these displayed or perhaps possessed. Nor is it a backcloth against which to see human activity; it is a system which includes that activity, profoundly modifies it, and ultimately controls it.<sup>18</sup>

The emphasis of Lawrence's analysis, however, rests squarely on the fact that in Hardy's novels the great forces of nature come to a head in their human manifestation, and the human struggle to "come into being" consists in man's attempt to "learn to be at one, in his mind and will, with the primal impulses that rise in him" (418). In this sense, the implications of "physiology" in Lawrence's letter to Garnett become clearer. In "The Marble and the Statue," Mark Kinkead-Weekes finds that "through studying . . . Hardy's people Lawrence had found a language in which to conceive the impersonal forces he saw operating within and between human beings; involving a new clarification of what the novel he had been trying to write [The Sisters] was really

about; and the discovery of a 'structural skeleton' on which to re-found it in a new dimension."<sup>19</sup>

It is the quality of this confrontation of the impersonal forces of unfathomed nature with "a smaller system of morality . . . formulated by the human consciousness," (419) according to Lawrence, that Hardy shares with the great writers, such as Shakespeare, Sophocles, or Tolstoi. The difference in these four writers, he says, is that in Sophocles and Shakespeare the incomprehensible morality of nature is transgressed and returns active punishment; but in Hardy and Tolstoi, the lesser system of human morality is transgressed and in turn punishes the protagonist. The "real tragedy" is that the heroes and heroines of Hardy and Tolstoi "are unfaithful to the greater unwritten morality" (420); that is, they fail to reconcile the primary impulses within them to their own particular human situation.\* This, Lawrence believes, is "the weakness of modern tragedy": its

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\*Cf. Lawrence's remarks on Anna Karenina, in Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays (1925):

Nobody in the world is anything but delighted when Vronsky gets Anna Karenina. Then what about the sin? Why, when you look at it, all the tragedy comes from Vronsky's and Anna's fear of society. The monster was social, not phallic at all. They couldn't live in the pride of their sincere passion, and spit in Mother Grundy's eye. And that, that cowardice, was the real "sin." The novel makes it obvious, and knocks all old Leo's teeth out.

heroes war with (and lose to) Society, not with God. Transgression against the conventions of society leads inevitably to destruction, "as though the social code worked our irrevocable fate."

In such reduction may perhaps be seen the central trend of tradition in the nineteenth-century novel. From the conventions of Highbury in Jane Austen's Emma, to George Eliot's Middlemarch and Hardy's Jude, the characters of novels are contained, defined, and judged by societal forms. Personal destiny is social destiny, as George Eliot implies in Felix Holt: "There is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life."<sup>20</sup> In such novels, as Arnold Kettle says of Middlemarch, "the background has become the subject."<sup>21</sup> The mechanistic, deterministic pattern of life which Eliot portrays in Middlemarch stems from the town itself, which is represented as a static, limiting, controlling order. The ideal of conduct in such an order is the status quo, and transcendence of that value is tantamount to transgression.

#### IV

In a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell, dated January 27, 1915, Lawrence writes, "The way to express the abstract-whole is to reduce the object to a unit, a term, and then out of these units and terms to make a whole statement."<sup>22</sup> It is apparent that after (or during) the third chapter of the Study, Lawrence became dissatisfied with his first

duality of self-preservation v. self-fulfillment, at least as a vehicle for talking about character. For it is at this point that the initial duality is dropped and, after a chapter attacking the Carlylean concept of work (as he does so often in the novels, notably The Rainbow, Women in Love, Aaron's Rod, and Lady Chatterley's Lover), Lawrence proposes a second duality by which to evaluate Hardy's heroes: "The distinct individuality" v. "the matrix" -- the individual against the bourgeois values of social convention (434). This duality, it is obvious, is a particular extension of the first, issuing from the particular consideration of Hardy's characters in terms of self-preservation v. self-fulfillment in the third chapter. Having established the predominance of the self-preserving impulse in society, as well as defining his view of true individuality as self-fulfillment, Lawrence simply changes the terms of his duality in order to approach his subjects from another direction:

Looking over the Hardy novels, it is interesting to see which of the heroes one would call a distinct individuality, more or less achieved, which an unaccomplished potential individuality, and which an impure unindividualized life embedded in the matrix, either achieving its own lower degree of distinction, or not achieving it (434).

It becomes readily apparent that this new approach is also primarily centered around Hardy's heroes and heroines and, more specifically, with what Lawrence calls Hardy's "predilection d'artiste for the aristocrat" (435). Desmond Hawkins has since posited a tradition of "a nervous, highly-

individualized sensibility in retreat from the social scene," of which "Hardy is the greatest modern example, and D. H. Lawrence his most brilliant disciple -- a very John of Patmos."<sup>23</sup> Such sensibilities are described by Lawrence in the third chapter as having "a real, vital, potential self" (410) and as being "passionate, individual, willful" (411). The aristocrat is one who has traditionally had the social and economic freedom "where he could afford to be, to be himself, to create himself, to live as himself" (436). Lawrence's special use of the term, as Richard D. Beards puts it, "applies to a quality of behavior rather than a particular social status;"<sup>24</sup> and I would prefer to say a quality of being, rather than behavior, identifies the aristocrat for Lawrence. It is in what Tess is, rather than what she does, that makes her an aristocrat:

She is of an old line, and has the aristocratic quality of respect for the other being. She does not see the other person as an extension of herself, existing in a universe of which she is the center and pivot. She knows that other people are outside her. Therein she is an aristocrat.

She respects utterly the other's right to be. She is herself always (483).

This predilection for the aristocratic freedoms and temperament is not only the obsession of Hardy (and Lawrence as well); "it is rooted deeply in every imaginative human being." "The glory of mankind," Lawrence goes on, "has been to produce lives, to produce vivid, independent,

individual men, not buildings or engineering works or even art, not even the public good. The glory of mankind is not in a host of secure, comfortable, law-abiding citizens, but in a few more fine, clear lives, beings, individual, distinct, detached, single as may be from the public." Such heroes, says Lawrence, "the artist of all time has chosen" (436).<sup>25</sup>

"Why, then," he asks, "must the aristocrat always be condemned to death, in Hardy?" Lawrence posits two reasons: first, there is "a germ of death" in the more distinct individuality of the hero; and second, "the artist himself [Hardy] has a bourgeois taint," which revenges itself on the aristocrat (436). Hardy makes his exceptional people villains "in steadily weakening degree" in the course of his novels: "Hardy, like Tolstoi, is forced in the issue always to stand with the community in condemnation of the aristocrat" (439). In the earlier novels, the individual is the villain and the community triumphs over him; but even in the later novels (Return of the Native, Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess and Jude) Hardy "must select his individual with a definite weakness, a certain coldness of temper, inelastic, a certain inevitable and inconquerable adhesion to the community." Lawrence accuses Hardy of a "moral antagonism" toward the character who stands outside the societal pale: whether the character is good (Jude) or bad (Manston), he is obliged to be obliterated by the society which produced

him, and for this kind of predilection d'artiste Lawrence says that Hardy "is something of an Angel Clare" (489).

The conclusions which Lawrence draws from this "new" approach to Hardy's people are the same as those drawn in the third chapter: the individual is defeated by society and is unable to create and fulfill his own being. Furthermore, the fault is partly his own in that he cannot break the last ties or obligations to that which destroys him, the community itself. He dies primarily by his "own lack of strength to bear the isolation and the exposure" (411). Again, Lawrence finds such tragedy flawed:

There is a lack of sternness, there is a hesitating betwixt life and public opinion, which diminishes the Wessex novels from the rank of pure tragedy. . . . It is not that vital life-forces are set in conflict with each other. . . . It is, in Wessex, that the individual succumbs to what is in its shallowest, public opinion, in its deepest, the human compact by which we live together, to form a community (440).

Lawrence's quarrel is not with Hardy or Tolstoi per se, nor even with "modern tragedy," but with the entire tragic mode. His strictly Pelagian world-view denies the possibility of fate or destiny, which are essential to tragedy. Man, for Lawrence, is both radically innocent and capable of working out his own salvation; he is "utterly self-responsible."<sup>26</sup> Thus man is ultimately responsible for everything that happens to him. All good and evil "lies in the heart of man and not in the conditions" (406). As Lawrence says in a short poem, not society but "the fear of

society is the root of all evil."<sup>27</sup> Thus "Tess allowed herself to be condemned, and asked for punishment from Angel Clare . . . [because] she sided with the community's condemnation of her" (440).

As we have seen, the tragic protagonist must above all be heroic; but if he is truly heroic, Lawrence would argue, there would be no tragedy. (The hero, it should be remembered, is the radically innocent man capable of creating his own destiny.) Lawrence explains this most clearly, perhaps, in his introduction to a book by Giovanni Verga:

I think it is a final criticism against Madame Bovary that people such as Emma Bovary and her husband Charles simply are too insignificant to carry the full weight of Gustave Flaubert's sense of tragedy. Emma and Charles Bovary are a couple of little people. Gustave Flaubert is not a little person. But, because he is a realist and does not believe in "heroes," Flaubert insists on pouring his own deep and bitter tragic consciousness into the little skins of the country doctor and his uneasy wife. The result is a . . . misfit. And to get over the misfit, you have to let in all sorts of seams of pity. Seams of pity, which won't be hidden.

. . . . . The realistic-democratic age has dodged the dilemma of having no heroes by having every man his own hero. This is reached by what we call subjective intensity, and in this subjectively-intense every-man-his-own hero business the Russians have carried us to the greatest lengths. The merest scrub of a pick-pocket is so phenomenally aware of his own soul, that we are made to bow down before the imaginary coruscations that go on inside him. . . .

Of course your soul will coruscate, if you think it does. That's why the Russians are so popular. No matter how much of a shabby animal you may be, you can learn

from Dostoievsky and Chekhov, etc., how to have the most tender, unique, coruscating soul on earth. And so you may be most vastly important to yourself. Which is the private aim of all men. The hero had it openly. The commonplace person has it inside himself (226,228-229).

Lawrence's disdain of the "imaginary coruscations" of the soul leads him to scorn the classical accompanists of the tragic hero and the tragic mode: fear and pity. The evocation of such emotions, he feels, leads inexorably to an unseemly self-conscious self-pity, as he points out in his poem "Tragedy":

Tragedy seems to be a loud noise  
Louder than is seemly.

Tragedy looks to me like man  
In love with his own defeat.  
Which is only a sloppy way of being  
in love with yourself.

I can't very much care about the  
woes and tragedies  
Of Lear and Macbeth and Hamlet and Timon.  
They cared so excessively themselves.<sup>28</sup>

As David Gordon puts it, "he felt that tragedy tended at once to magnify spuriously by creating pity for the wronged good and to depress by assuming the inevitability of defeat. It tended, that is, toward sentimentality, and it assumed that earthly life could not be complete and nontragic."<sup>29</sup>

V

Three succeeding chapters (the sixth, seventh and eighth) prepare for the third and final segment of Lawrence's analysis of Hardy. Again, Lawrence changes the terms of his argument, creating a new conceptual model with which

to examine "Hardy's people." David Gordon explains this most clearly:

Now Lawrence shifts his approach. The terms are no longer social morality versus natural morality but the polar forces of natural morality itself: Love versus Law, Male versus Female, Spirit versus Flesh, Christ versus Jehovah. With this new scheme the error of Hardy's art -- and it is only Hardy's best art the critic is now concerned with -- can be formulated in a new way.<sup>30</sup>

In the three intermediate chapters, which are an interpretation of the whole of Western art and culture, Lawrence constructs a dialectic through which he can at once examine Hardy's best novels and formulate new standards for his own. The earlier dualities by which Lawrence examined the self in relation to its community are replaced by a dialectic which focuses on the self in relation to itself and to other individuals. This movement of the Study is the key to Lawrence's changing critical method, though it has been long unrecognized. In The Forked Flame, for instance, H. M. Daleski argues for a continuing dualism in which there is neither resolution nor transcendence of the dual polarities.<sup>31</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weekes, on the other hand, characterizes Lawrence's structural skeleton in the Study as "not dualistic but implicitly dialectic, since it always implies a state beyond every successive clash of thesis and anti-thesis."<sup>32</sup> The problem here, of course, is that Daleski's argument is true for the first two Laurentian dualities (self-fulfillment v. self-preservation, and "the distinct

individuality, or hero, v. the bourgeois values of social convention"), but it does not take into account the essential difference in the third set of opposed terms (Law v. Love, male principle v. female principle, flesh v. mind, etc.), which is aimed at producing a concept of the unity of being. This third set of opposed values, then, is a dialectic -- in which synthesis is possible. In the first and second sets of polarities, of course, no synthesis was possible. Daleski's term "duality" accounts for these first two sets, but fails to account for dialectical nature of the third set. Kinkead-Weekes, on the other hand, gives us a satisfactory account of the dialectical framework of the final chapters of the Study, but he does not recognize the purely dualistic nature of the first five chapters. Kinkead-Weekes' description, for example, cannot account for the irresolvable conflict (hence dualistic) which Lawrence sees at the center of the modern tragic form. With this distinction between duality and dialectic in mind, both the Study and the Laurentian metaphysic become more easily accessible.

The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters of the Study attempt to define the terms of this new dialectic, Law and Love (or Female and Male). Though it is neither necessary nor convenient to my argument to examine these chapters in detail, H. M. Daleski has constructed a table "abstracting the qualities" of this polarity. He includes reference to

the page numbers in the Phoenix where discussion of the particular qualities may be found:<sup>33</sup>

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Movement	Stability
Change	Immutability
Activity	Permanence
Time	Eternality <sup>a</sup>
Will-to-Motion	Will-to-Inertia <sup>b</sup>
Registers Relationships	Occupied in Self-Feeling
Refusal of Sensation	Submission to Sensation
Multiplicity and Diversity	Oneness <sup>c</sup>
Knowledge	Feeling <sup>d</sup>
Love	Law
Spirit	Flesh
God the Son	God the Father <sup>e</sup>
Service of Some Idea	Full Life in the Body
Doing	Being <sup>f</sup>
Self-Subordination	Self-Establishment <sup>g</sup>
Utterance	Gratification in the Senses <sup>h</sup>
Abstraction	Enjoyment through the Senses <sup>i</sup>
Public Good	
Community	Sensation <sup>j</sup>
Mental Clarity	Instinct <sup>k</sup>
Consciousness	Soul
Spirit	Senses
Mind	Feelings <sup>l</sup>
Consciousnes	Nature <sup>m</sup>
Knowledge	Condition of Being
Condition of Knowledge	Body <sup>n</sup>
Brain	Root
Stalk	

<sup>a</sup>Phoenix, p. 446.

<sup>d</sup>Ibid., p. 455.

<sup>g</sup>Ibid., pp. 483, 485.

<sup>j</sup>Ibid., p. 498.

<sup>m</sup>Ibid., p. 510.

<sup>b</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>e</sup>Ibid., p. 476.

<sup>h</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>k</sup>Ibid., p. 501.

<sup>n</sup>Ibid., p. 513.

<sup>c</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>f</sup>Ibid., p. 481.

<sup>i</sup>Ibid., p. 487.

<sup>l</sup>Ibid., p. 509.

Law (Female) is seen as the center of the Hebraic tradition; Love (Male) identifies the Christian tradition:

In the Father we are one flesh, in Christ we are crucified, and rise again, and are One

with Him in Spirit. It is the difference between Law and Love. Each man shall live according to the Law, which changeth not, says the old religion. Each man shall live according to Love, which shall save us from death and from the Law, says the new religion (465).

For each man there is the bride, for each woman the bridegroom, for all, the Mystic Marriage (467).

In the rest of the Study, then, Lawrence is attempting to schematize the art of the Western world in terms of his theory of Occidental history and religion. He examines the painting of Durer, Botticelli, Correggio, Raphael, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and Turner, as well as the "metaphysic" of Aeschylus, Euripides, Shelley, Swinburne, Spinoza and Tolstoi. The "Mystic Marriage" of Love and Law, of the Male and Female principles, becomes the compelling goal of art (as evidenced in the work of Aeschylus and Turner), but the essential content of art is conflict. Aeschylus' art is more satisfying than that of Euripides because the former portrays an equal, balanced conflict, where the latter has Love "unequally matched" with Law:

If Aeschylus has a metaphysic to his art, this metaphysic is that Love and Law are Two, eternally in conflict, and eternally being reconciled (477).

This dialectic is the basis of Lawrence's theory of form:

Artistic form is a revelation of the two principles of Love and the Law in a state of conflict and yet reconciled: pure motion struggling against and yet reconciled with the Spirit: active force meeting and overcoming and yet not overcoming inertia. It is the conjunction of the two which makes form. And since the two must always

meet under fresh conditions, form must always be different. Each work of art has its own form, which has no relation to any other form (477).

The form of Hardy's art errs on the side of Euripides (and Tolstoi): "'There is no reconciliation between Love and the Law,' says Hardy. 'The spirit of Love must always succumb before the blind, stupid, but overwhelming power of the Law'" (480). Lawrence sees in Hardy an unsympathetic portrayal of the Female principles (flesh, primeval Law) as either too strong (Jude accepting Arabella) or too weak (Angel Clare rejecting Tess), but always disruptive. The conflict itself, however, is inevitably unequal; Law always conquers Love. Lawrence attributes this unequal conflict in the novels to "the weak yet obstinate theory of being" in the author, but Lawrence does not ultimately see either the novels nor Hardy as failures. Hardy's metaphysic, to be sure, is "botched," but as an artist, "his sensuous understanding is . . . deeper than that, perhaps, of any other English novelist" (480). This is a point Lawrence often makes about Hardy: though the book is wrong in its intellectual conception, it is ultimately right as art. Of Tess, for example, he says,

And so Hardy really states his case, which is not his consciously stated metaphysic, by any means, but a statement how man has gone wrong and brought death on himself: how man has violated the Law, how he has supererogated himself, gone so far in his male conceit as to supersede the Creator, and win death as a reward. Indeed, the works of supererogation of our male assiduity helps us to a better salvation (488).

The art of even the greatest artists, however, "leaves the soul unsatisfied" if the metaphysic is infirm. "Humanity does not continue for long to accept the conclusions" of either the artist of the Law (Aeschylus, Dante, Plato, Raphael) or the artist of Love (Shakespeare, Shelley, Wordsworth, Goethe, Hardy). Indeed, "now the aim of man remains to recognize and seek out the Holy Spirit, the Reconciler, the Originator, He who drives the twin principles of Law and of Love across the ages" (514). Neither Hardy nor anyone else has made the art which must be the art of the future: "there shall be the art which knows the struggle between the two conflicting laws, and knows the final reconciliation, where both are equal, two-in-one, complete. This is the supreme art, which yet remains to be done" (515-516).

This consummation is a goal at once artistic, religious, and psychological. The Eucharist is "the ritual representing the Consummation" (467); and the "deepest human desire [is] for consummation" (468). The goal of this desire is the "Mystic Marriage" of Law and Love. As Kinkead-Weekes points out, "what we watch is Lawrence in the act of trying to formulate a 'theoretical' basis for his whole intuitive view of marriage . . . a way of looking at every personality and all relationships as the outcome of conflict between two radically opposed forces, impersonal, and universal."<sup>34</sup> Both forces, it should be noted, are seen as positive ways of being, but they must be brought together to express the

whole "Truth": "What we call the Truth is, in actual experience, that momentary state when in living the union between the male and the female is consummated. This consummation may be also physical, between the male body and the female body. But it may be only spiritual, between the male and female spirit" (460). The force of the female (or Law) is toward total identification with the "primal impulses" of nature, toward oneness with all flesh and all things. The force of the male (Love) "is to move into ever more complete individuation."<sup>35</sup>

The conflict which ensues from these opposites is eternal,\* but "the two must be for ever reconciled" (475). And, as H. M. Daleski argues, "the contending forces must retain their separate identities" even in reconciliation. "The new whole," he goes on, "which is created by establishing a relation between the opposites is not a fusing of the two into one but a complementing of the one by the other."<sup>36</sup> The consummation paradoxically reveals in the clearest light the very identities which it joins:

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\*Cf. Lawrence's introduction to "Reptiles" in Birds, Beasts and Flowers:

"Homer was wrong in saying, 'Would that strife might pass away from among Gods and men!' He did not see that he was praying for the destruction of the universe; for, if his prayer were heard, all things would pass away" -- for in the tension of opposites all things have their being (Collected Poems, p. 348).

In the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes pure, that which is female in me is given to the female, that which is male in her draws into me, I am complete, I am pure male, she is pure female; we rejoice in contact perfect and naked and clear, singled out onto ourselves, and given the surpassing freedom. No longer we see through a glass, darkly. For she is she, and I am I, and, clasped together with her, I know how perfectly she is not me, how perfectly I am not her, how utterly we are two, the light and the darkness, and how infinitely and eternally not-to-be-comprehended by either of us is the surpassing One we make. Yet of this One, this incomprehensible, we have an inkling that satisfies us (468).<sup>37</sup>

BVR

It is clear that the form of the Study, as well as the theoretical form of art posited in the Study, is that of marriage. In this marriage there are two polar forces of equal strength which are always in conflict and forever being reconciled. In reconciliation there is "surpassing freedom," but there is never stasis; there is always growth and conflict and reconciliation: "active force meeting and overcoming and yet not overcoming inertia" (477). Final reconciliation is not yet possible although, in time, it may be attained: "No man can as yet find perfect consummation of marriage between himself and the Bride, be the bride either Woman or an Idea, but he can approximate to it, and every generation can get a little nearer" (515).

The forces of art and the forces of character are impersonal ones, ever in a process of conflict and reconciliation, constantly showing up in different forms (changing

their names and their appearances), but essentially unchanging. The task of the artist is to portray the interaction of these forces, to give them utterance: "When the two are acting together, then Life is produced, then Life, or Utterance, Something is created. [\*] And nothing is or can be created save by combined effort of the two principles, Law and Love" (513).

This, then, was the Laurentian metaphysic in 1914.

Let us return to our first quotation from the Study:

Because a novel is a microcosm, and because man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory, therefore every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic (479).

This theory of being, which is unfolded in the Study, is an elaboration on the "allotropic states of the ego" about which Lawrence wrote to Garnett. Three months after completing the Study, Lawrence had completely revised The Sisters and had divided it into at least two volumes.<sup>38</sup> There can be little doubt of the importance of the Study for the final version of The Rainbow,<sup>39</sup> nor of its importance for Lawrence's radically new concept of character. With the formulation and elaboration of this concept, Lawrence was creating

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\*Cf. Part II of Lawrence's poem "Wedlock" (Collected Poems, p. 247):

And think, there will something come forth from us,  
 We two, folded so small together,  
 There will something come forth from us.  
 Children, acts, utterance,  
 Perhaps only happiness.

a new kind of reality for his characters. It is the kind of reality Freud and Jung were also creating, although Lawrence knew next to nothing about them. With this radical view of self Lawrence was to shape the faltering project of The Sisters into The Rainbow and Women in Love within three years.<sup>40</sup>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> International Book Review; the essay also appears in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Edward D. McDonald (New York: Viking Press, 1936), pp. 517-20 (hereafter cited as Phoenix).

<sup>2</sup> Phoenix, p. 479. Most critics underline the Study of Thomas Hardy for the reader's convenience.

<sup>3</sup> The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1962), I, 287. Also The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Aldous Huxley (London: Heinemann, 1932), p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Letters, ed. Moore, I, 290; also, Letters, ed. Huxley, p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> S. Foster Damon, Amy Lowell. A Chronicle (Boston: n.p., 1935), p. 279.

<sup>6</sup> Phoenix, p. 485.

<sup>7</sup> George H. Ford, Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 21, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Letters, ed. Moore, I, 281-82; also Letters, ed. Huxley, pp. 198-99.

<sup>9</sup> Ford, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Harry T. Moore, The Intelligent Heart (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954), p. 163.

<sup>11</sup> H. M. Daleski, The Forked Flame (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Phoenix, p. 398. Numbers parenthetically enclosed in text refer to previously cited edition of Phoenix.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 3. As we shall later see, Lawrence's distinction between self-fulfillment and self-preservation is important here.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Sartre, on the other hand, would seem to accept the Laurentian duality: see Part One, Chapter 2 of Being and Nothingness (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

<sup>18</sup> John Holloway, The Victorian Sage (London: MacMillan, 1953), pp. 251-52.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "The Marble and the Statue," Imagined Worlds, ed. Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen and Co., 1968), p. 380.

<sup>20</sup> George Eliot, Felix Holt the Radical (London: Panther Books Ltd., 1965), p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 172.

<sup>22</sup> Letters, ed. Huxley, p. 216.

<sup>23</sup> Desmond Hawkins, Thomas Hardy (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1950), pp. 30-31.

<sup>24</sup> Richard D. Beards, "D. H. Lawrence and the Study of Thomas Hardy," The D. H. Lawrence Review, 2 (Fall 1969), 221.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Eric Bentley, A Century of Hero Worship (New York: Lippincott, 1944), pp. 231-53, in which Lawrence's concept of the hero and his use of the hero in his own novels is discussed.

<sup>26</sup> David J. Gordon, D. H. Lawrence as a Literary Critic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence, ed. with intro. by Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, 2 vols. (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 516.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 508.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon, p. 79.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>31</sup>Daleski, p. 21.

<sup>32</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, pp. 382-83.

<sup>33</sup>Daleski, p. 30.

<sup>34</sup>Kinkead-Weekes, p. 383.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>36</sup>Daleski, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Lawrence's long poem, "Manifesto," pt. VII:

I want her to touch me at last, ah on  
the root and quick of my darkness  
and perish on me as I have perished on her.

Then, we shall be two and distinct, we shall  
have each our separate being.  
And that will be pure existence, real liberty.  
Till then, we are confused, a mixture,  
unresolved, unextricated one from the other.

When she is slain against me, and lies in a  
heap like one outside the house,  
When she passes away as I have passed away,  
being pressed up against the other,  
then I shall be glad, I shall not be confused  
with her,  
I shall be cleared, distinct, single as if  
burnished in silver,  
having no adherence, no adhesion anywhere,  
one clear, burnished, isolated being, unique,  
and she is also pure isolated, complete,  
two of us, unutterably distinguished, and in  
unutterable conjunction.

Then we shall be free, freer than angels,  
ah, perfect.

<sup>38</sup>See Letters, ed. Huxley, p. 212; and Letters, ed. Moore, I, 296, 306.

<sup>39</sup>The Intelligent Heart, p. 189; also cf. Daleski, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup>See The Intelligent Heart, p. 163, for Moore's discussion of this crucial change of direction in Lawrence's life and art.

## CHAPTER II

### HARDY INTO LAWRENCE: CHANGING THE MOLD

The descent beckons  
as the ascent beckoned  
Memory is a kind  
of accomplishment  
a sort of renewal  
even  
an initiation, since the spaces it opens are new  
places,  
inhabited by hordes  
heretofore unrealized.  
W. C. Williams, Patterson

My known self will never be more than a  
little clearing in the forest.

Gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest  
into the clearing of my known self,  
and then go back.

I must have the courage to let them  
come and go.

D. H. Lawrence, Studies in  
Classic American Literature

Lawrence's views of character and being had not always been as clear as they became in the Study. It has long been obvious to his critics that Lawrence leans heavily, in the earlier novels (i.e., The White Peacock [1911], The Trespasser [1912], and Sons and Lovers [1913]), on his predecessors in the novel, and in particular, on Thomas Hardy. Precise critical discussion of this "literary ancestry" is usually limited, however, to The White Peacock, or to

cursory remarks about style, tone, or landscape. Raney Stanford's article, entitled "Thomas Hardy and Lawrence's The White Peacock,"<sup>1</sup> for example, finds in the heroine of that novel, Lettie Beardsall, a close resemblance to Sue Bridehead of Hardy's Jude the Obscure, and other critics have affirmed this connection.<sup>2</sup>

It seems profitable, however, to press this connection further, and to ask why Lawrence chose to write "a little book about Hardy's people" so late in his career (June-November, 1914) if Hardy's influence is indeed limited to that first novel. And why, furthermore, was Lawrence concerned with an analysis of Hardy after Sons and Lovers, his third and last novel of the early, Hardyesque period, was finished, and during the last six revisions of the Sisters?

Richard D. Beards makes a halting attempt to discover Hardian themes in the later novels of Lawrence in his essay, "D. H. Lawrence and The Study of Thomas Hardy, His Victorian Predecessor" [sic],<sup>3</sup> but I am interested primarily in Lawrence's characters. I suggest that Lawrence wrote his study of Hardy with a very current interest: he found in the Hardy novels, and particularly in the characters of those novels, an artist grappling with the same kinds of problems he had faced and was facing in his own novels. The central problem of The Return of the Native, Tess and Jude, is that of Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, and Women in Love: the effort of a character, or of characters, to find

and to establish a "best self," in Matthew Arnold's terms, in the midst of a world where the structure of the community and the face of nature itself is changing. Tess's journey from Marlott to Stonehenge and Jude's trek from Marygreen to Christminster are Paul Morel's journey from the ash-pits to the "humming, glowing town," and the movement of the Brangwen family from the Marsh to the "outer world" of the university, and the hope of "a new world."

Lawrence's analysis of characters and human relationships in the Study involves, I suspect, two primary concerns. He was not only trying to articulate a "structural skeleton" for his future novels, including the work in progress; he was also attempting to clarify the fictional lives of his characters in the book he had just finished. Indeed, Lawrence's frequent attacks on Hardy's art often read like a vindication of his own, and with good reason: not only is the human condition similar in the works of the two novelists, the characters themselves are often much alike. Metaphysically and aesthetically speaking, then, we may view Sons and Lovers partially as Lawrence's attempt to rewrite Jude the Obscure, just as Chapter IX of the Study is an expository attempt to explain the deficiencies and suggest the alternative possibilities of Tess and Jude. A comparison of Sons and Lovers with Jude, along with Lawrence's critical reactions to Hardy's novel, should illuminate our understanding of the later novel. It will reveal what

conflicts Lawrence considers central to Hardy's novel and consequently, to his own. The contrasts between the two novels may reveal, conversely, what Lawrence rejects in the earlier novel from either an aesthetic or (more probably) a metaphysical point of view. I shall try to point out some of the significant similarities and differences in these two novels, and to suggest the implications each has for Lawrence's characters.

## II

Just as Ward Hellstrom's article, "Hardy's Scholar-Gipsy,"<sup>4</sup> argues that "Hardy may have originally intended to dramatize in Jude certain Arnoldian precepts, adhering to some and rejecting others," Lawrence seems in Sons and Lovers and the Study to have accepted some of Hardy's presentation of the human condition in Jude, though by no means all. Certainly both novels are concerned with the attempt to attain the outer world or the "best self" by a character positioned between the manual and intellectual worlds.

Jude Fawley is a stonemason who would be a scholar, and his "ruling passion" is his desire to become a student at Christminster, his personal symbol of intellectual beauty and truth. Jude roams the Wessex countryside, cutting stone during the day and studying the classics at night, waiting for his chance to enter Christminster as a scholar; but the opportunity never comes. Along the way, Jude is tricked into marriage by the fleshly, sensuous country girl,

Arabella, who subsequently leaves him and reappears throughout the novel as the emblem of animal lust and bodily pleasure. Jude also falls in love with Sue, his intellectual, neurotic, virginal cousin whom he temporarily substitutes for Christminster as his ideal of intellectual beauty. Sue gradually renounces her former intellectual aloofness for a demeaning Christian piety and subjection; Jude then rejects her as "not worthy of a man's love," and dies in suicidal despair. Christminster remains Jude's idealized "city of light," nonetheless, to the end.

Jude's attempt to enter Christminster, which the narrator ambiguously calls "his form of the modern vice of unrest,"<sup>5</sup> is an attempt to establish a new or best self, a self outside of social expectation or artifice, based on something final, stable, and ideal: "It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to -- for some place which he could call admirable. Should he find that place in this city . . .?" (J 68). To Jude's young mind the city is "a wonderful place for scholarship and religion" (J 69), and he becomes primarily interested in his own 'mental progress' (J 79). Lawrence says that Jude concentrates on becoming "a non-developing quality, an academic mechanism," and wants life "merely in the secondary, outside form, in the consciousness. . . . He wanted to exist only in his mentality. He was as if bored in the body. . . . This seems to be the result of coming of an

old family that had long been conscious, long self-conscious, specialized, separate, exhausted.<sup>6</sup> For Lawrence, then, Jude embodies the male principle of conscious mentality discussed in the preceding chapter of this study. This mental pre-occupation, says Lawrence, "drove him to Sue," who, like Jude, "wanted to live partially, in the consciousness, in the mind only. She wanted no experience in the senses, she wished only to know" (P 496). Lawrence sees Sue as the pure embodiment of one of the principles which operate in Jude, the principle of mind. Arabella is the embodiment of the other principle, of the flesh, and "Jude contains them both" (P 488). Thus Lawrence sees Sue and Christminster as manifestations of the same principle, and Jude's attraction to each stemming from his love of mind, or the conscious life. Jude's rejection of Arabella is, of course, a rejection of the physical, fleshly world, and it is this one-sided development that kills Jude:

And this tragedy is the result of over-development of one principle of human life at the expense of the other; an over-balancing; a laying of all the stress on the Male, the Love, the Spirit, the Mind, the Consciousness; a denying, a blaspheming against the Female, the Law, the Soul, the Senses, the Feelings. But she [Sue] is developed to the very extreme, she scarcely lives in the body at all. Being of the feminine gender, she is yet no woman at all, nor male; she is almost neuter. He [Jude] is nearer the balance, nearer the centre, nearer the wholeness. But the whole human effort, towards pure life in the spirit, towards becoming pure Sue, drags him along; he identifies himself with this effort, destroys himself and her in his adherence to this identification (P 509-510).

Paul Morel, the protagonist of Sons and Lovers, is also stationed between the manual, rural world and the intellectual world. His father, Walter, is a pit miner in the coal fields of Nottinghamshire, and his mother, Gertrude, is the daughter of an upper-middle class family which "ignored all sensuous pleasure." Walter is described as "soft, non-intellectual, warm, . . . gambolling"; Gertrude is his opposite: "She loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual."<sup>7</sup> Gertrude offers to her sons, as Raymond Williams puts it, "a projected idea of what a good life would be, what getting on would be -- as Clym's mother had put it in The Return of the Native."<sup>8</sup> Paul chooses his mother as an ideal as Jude chose Christminster -- as an anchor for his soul: "Hers was the strongest tie in his life. . . . There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. . . . It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother" (SL 222).

Paul rejects his swearing, hard-drinking, brawling father for the intellectual, refined way of life his mother represents, but it is clear that Mrs. Morel is not simply an intellectual, or cultural, ideal. Paul sees in Gertrude both a mental and physical ideality. It is for this reason that the 'bodiless' Miriam, who is so like Mrs. Morel in many ways, is finally unable to replace Gertrude as Paul's

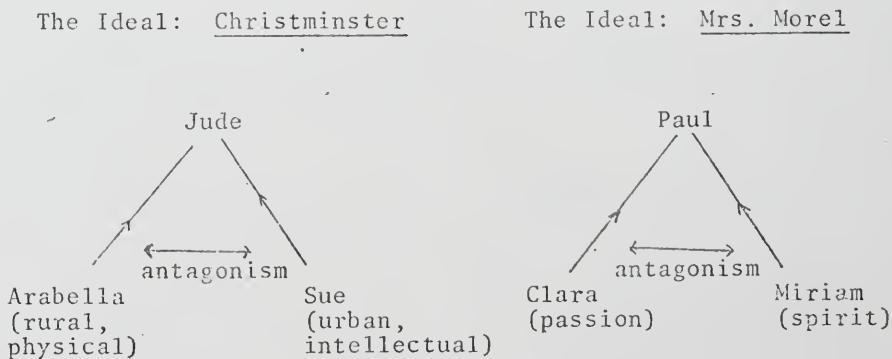
lover. He tells Miriam in the chapter entitled "Passion,"

"That's what one must have, I think . . . the real, real flame of feeling through another person -- once, only once, if it only last three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There's not a tiny bit of feeling of sterility about her" (SL 317).

Later Paul says this 'baptism of fire in passion' "almost seems to fertilise your soul and make it that you can go on and mature." The novel thus saves Mrs. Morel from being the "non-developing quality, an academic mechanism" that Lawrence sees Jude becoming in his idealization and worship of Christminster.

Though the conflict in Jude between passion and mind is only a secondary consideration in that novel, the same conflict in Sons and Lovers becomes the primary theme as Paul matures. In Paul's mind at least, Mrs. Morel is an ideal who incorporates both physical and mental qualities of the best self. In Miriam, Paul finds the spiritual qualities of his mother; and in Clara he finds physical satisfaction, but neither woman incorporates both principles, as Paul's ideal must. Like Arabella and Sue, Clara and Miriam "represent the same pair of [male and female] principles"; and Paul, like Jude, "contains them both" (P 488). In both novels there is a structural positioning of characters, with the hero as focal point, which dramatizes the conflicts of the story. Lawrence makes this clear in Sons

and Lovers in the "Defeat of Miriam" chapter, where Paul finds himself stationed between Miriam's spiritual love on the one hand, and Clara's acute physicality on the other: "There was a triangle of antagonism between Paul and Clara and Miriam" (SL 249). The relationships between the central forces of the two novels might be represented diagrammatically:



One is almost forced to agree with Mark Schorer's judgment that Lawrence is too close to Sons and Lovers, autobiographically speaking, and that the narrator in the novel is not always objective or trustworthy. For instance, Paul thinks "he loved Miriam his soul. [But] He grew warm at the thought of Clara . . ." (SL 279). Certainly it is difficult, when one encounters such passages, for the reader to know whether it is really Miriam who is the "nun," as Paul calls her, or Paul himself who makes her that way; whether Clara has only a physical nature -- or whether the

truth is that Paul sees only that side of her.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, even if the book is solely concerned with how things appear to Paul, it succeeds because appearance is important; appearance is a reality. Whether Paul and the narrator (they do often seem to be the same person, especially in the earlier chapters of Part II) are ultimately right about the one-sided natures of Clara and Miriam is finally of little importance, since the field of the novel is within Paul himself. He finally rejects both women because he sees them as embodying only one aspect of his ideal, an ideal which has, like himself, a dual nature. Unlike Jude, Paul does not commit suicide at the loss of his ideal, though the death of his mother leaves him whimpering in the streets. In Lawrence's rather weak ending, Paul marches off affirmatively, resolutely, toward a Laurentian Christminster:

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked toward the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.\*

### III

In Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D. H. Lawrence, Baruch Hochmann says, "we

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\*Cf. young Jude's vision of Christminster from the Brown House: "No individual light was visible, only a halo or glow-fog over-arching the place against the black heavens behind it, making the light and the city seem distant but a mile or so. . . . In the glow he seemed to see Phillotson promenading at ease, like one of the forms in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace" (1, iii).

have in Sons and Lovers the first clear depiction of the process of self-realization as conceived and enunciated in the Hardy "study": the process of coming-into-being on the high road of love and of its unfolding in relation to the greater life of nature.<sup>10</sup> This is, I think, an accurate description of Paul's road to self-realization, and it is an important variance from Jude's quest for his best self. As Ward Hellstrom points out, Jude's real impulse is intellectual and cultural. Even his interest in Sue Bridehead stems from his "wish for intellectual sympathy":

Though he is denied a university degree and ordination and finally Sue, [Jude] remains free to cultivate his best self, what Arnold calls in "The Buried Life" his "genuine self." He remains constant to his search after knowledge of his buried life, constant to his attempt to expand his powers and add to his growth in wisdom.<sup>11</sup>

For Paul Morel and for Lawrence, on the other hand, the way to wholeness of being is through love, rather than culture. In his analysis of Jude in the Hardy study, Lawrence implies that Jude would have found his best self without Christminster, had he only been able to establish a satisfactory sexual relationship with Arabella or Sue. In sexual consummation, rather than culture or learning, Lawrence says wisdom is to be found, and the self discovered. At the risk of repetition, let me again quote the central passage from the Hardy Study in this regard:

In Love, in the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes pure, that which is female in me is given to the female, that which is male in her draws into me, I am complete, I am pure male, she is pure female; we rejoice in contact perfect and naked and clear, singled out unto ourselves, and given the surpassing freedom. No longer we see through a glass, darkly. For she is she, and I am I, and, clasped together with her, I know how perfectly she is not me, how perfectly I am not her, how utterly we are two, the light and the darkness, and how infinitely and eternally not-to-be-comprehended by either of us is the surpassing One we make. Yet of this One, this incomprehensible, we have an inkling that satisfied us (P 468).. .

Jude acts according to the dictates of his best self when he obeys his own conscience and personal moral code, when he does not pervert his actions by simple compliance with "social formulas" (J 367).<sup>12</sup> The primary act of bad faith in Jude the Obscure is to act in mechanical accordance with externally ordained social "roles," to be Phillotson the outraged husband, or Sue the humble, obedient, and self-sacrificing wife. As Sue herself says, "the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns" (J 247). Throughout the book there is a constant and agonizing disparity between social forms and individual needs, between the uniqueness of the individual and the constraints of social convention. There is 'logic' to those conventions, as there is indeed logic in Tetuphenay's "terribly sensible" advice to Jude to "stick to your trade," but there is no humanity,

no allowance for human aspiration and grandeur. Sue's use of John Stuart Mill may be seen to illustrate the central moral point of the novel: "She, or he, 'who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation'" (J 265). Again quoting Mill, Sue says "'Human development in its richest diversity' is to my mind far above respectability," and I think the novel affirms this idea. Ultimately, only Jude remains above convention; as Phillotson seeks to regain some of his former social standing, Sue finds solace in role-playing, and Arabella dons once more her mask of dimples. Sue, it seems, is right when she says "domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce comfort in others!" (J 264). In his speech to the crowd at his return to Christminster, Jude voices his abhorrence of social roles and conventions, and describes his personal moral imperative of

'following inclinations which do me and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those I love best. . . . I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas. . . . "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life? -- and who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?'" (J 367).

Jude's 'high road' to the self is his "ruling passion" (as both Arabella and Sue call it): the attainment of culture. This is what the journey from Marygreen to

Christminster is all about. Sue says of Phillotson, "he had the same hankering for the University that you [Jude] had" (J 368); and Phillotson's capitulation to the forces of convention and social 'moulds' counterpoints and emphasizes Jude's affirmation of his self.

Whatever the role of sex is in Jude, it is not the means toward achieving or knowing the radically individual self. This is, I think, the central difference between the two novels: both are concerned with finding and holding to the best self, but the means by which one gains that self are different. Lawrence, like Hardy, is quite concerned with 'human development in its richest diversity.' In the Hardy Study, he says

It seems as though one of the conditions of life is, that life shall continually and progressively differentiate itself, almost as though this differentiation were a Purpose. Life starts crude and unspecified, a great Mass. And it proceeds to evolve out of that mass ever more distinct and definite particular forms, as if it were working always to the production of the infinite number of perfect individuals, the individual so thorough that he should have nothing in common with any other individual. . . .

The more I am singled out into utter individuality, the more this intrinsic me rejoices (P 431-432).

As I pointed out in part II of this chapter, the road to the self, for Lawrence, is "love, the act of love." Thus Miriam and Clara polarize Paul Morel's spiritual and sexual needs in love, where Sue and Arabella dramatize Jude's

levels of intellection. The structural balancing of the characters is quite similar, but the epistemological emphasis is altered. Lawrence reads Hardy (as, indeed, he reads everything) in sexual terms. Hardy considered Jude's sexual problems, I suspect, only one manifestation of a poor, rural, idealistic young man attempting to attain to the condition of sweetness and light.

## IV

With the idea in mind of what "coming into being," or attaining the best self, means for Hardy and what it means for Lawrence, let us examine three pairs of characters from the two novels for what such a comparison can reveal to us about the people of Sons and Lovers.

The original role of Sue Bridehead and Miriam Levers is, as I have said, that of counterpoints to Arabella Donn and Clara Dawes. Together Miriam and Clara make, as Lawrence says Sue and Arabella make "one complete marriage: that is, the two women added together made One Bride" (P 500). Each of the women represents one side of the hero, and the hero thinks of his two women as contrasting opposites.<sup>13</sup> As I have pointed out, Lawrence's interest in the polarity of Sue and Arabella is sexual rather than cultural, and he accordingly arranges his own contrasting females in sexual opposition.

Sue and Miriam describe the puritanical side of this sexual contrast; they are examples of what one critic has called "sublimated sexuality,"<sup>14</sup> and what psychologists would no doubt label 'frigid' women. Jude thinks or speaks of Sue at one time or another in the novel as "almost a divinity," "ethereal," "uncarnate," "aerial," "spirit, . . . disembodied creature . . . hardly flesh"; as a "phantasmal, bodiless creature," "a sort of fay, or sprite," and calls her "least sensual.". Sue wants Jude to kiss her "as a lover, incorporeally"; and Jude tells her that she has "little animal passion."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Miriam is described as "romantic in her soul," and "mystical," as a girl who "by her religious intensity" was cut off from the ordinary world, "which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise." Miriam's body "was not flexible and living," and she is "physically afraid." Jude contrasts the "tight, apple-like convexities" of Sue's body to "Arabella's amplitudes," and Miriam reflects Sue's quality of clenched physicality: "Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself."<sup>16</sup>

Like Sue, Miriam "wished she were a man," and Miriam associates this desire with the desire for knowledge, or culture:

"I should think women ought to be as glad to be women as men are to be men," Paul said.

"No!" -- she shook her head -- "no!  
Everything the men have."

"But what do you want?" he asked.

"I want to learn" (SL 154-155).

Lawrence views Sue Bridchead in the Study as living according to "the ultra-Christian principle -- of living entirely according to the Spirit," identifying herself "utterly with the male principle."<sup>17</sup> He has drawn Miriam in the same mold: she is concerned primarily with knowing, religious (she sings "like a nun, like a Botticelli Madonna"), and repulsed by the physical ("she had no body"). She too asks for (as Lawrence says of Sue in the Study) "what perhaps no man can give: passionate love without physical desire" (P 509).

Perhaps the best example of the similarity between Sue and Miriam is found in a set of parallel episodes concerning roses. In the earlier novel, *Jude*, Sue and Father Time are wandering about the Agricultural Fair at Stoke-Barehills, under the watchful eye of Arabella. Eventually the three enter the pavilion of flowers, and Arabella spies

Sue detaining *Jude* almost against his will while she learnt the names of this variety and that, and put her face within an inch of their blooms to smell them.

'I should like to push my face quite into them -- the dears!' she has said (J 337).

Lawrence remarks on this scene in the Study:

The real marriage of Jude and Sue was in the roses. Then, in the third state, in the spirit, these two beings met upon the roses and in the roses were symbolized in consummation. The rose is the symbol of marriage -- consummation in its beauty. To them it is more than a symbol, it is a fact, a flaming experience.

They went home tremblingly glad. And then the horror when, because of Jude's unsatisfaction, he must take Sue sexually. The flaming experience became a falsity, or an ignis fatuus leading them on (P 506-507).

Sue and Jude, then, consummate their spiritual union in the roses, but this kind of consummation is not, at last, enough for Jude, as it will not be enough for Paul Morel. In the "Lad-and-Girl Love" chapter of Lawrence's novel, Paul and Miriam also have a passionate "communion" over roses, but while Miriam walks home afterwards "feeling her soul satisfied with the holiness of the night," Paul feels "anxious and imprisoned" (SL 160). Later Paul despises Miriam for her unearthly affection for flowers:

To [Miriam], flowers appealed with such strength she felt she must make them part of herself. When she bent and breathed a flower, it was as if she and the flower were loving each other. Paul hated her for it (SL 173).

These similar episodes display a quality of Sue and Miriam which can be described only as ethereal. Both women eventually feel compelled to combat that ethereality by sacrificing their virginal beings, in order to keep their lovers. Lawrence calls Sue's sexual relations with Jude "a submission, a service, a slavery"; in his novel Miriam regards sexual intercourse with Paul a "suffering" and a

"sacrifice" (SL 284). Oddly enough, perhaps, Lawrence views Sue's accession to Jude's sexual desires as a lamentable nullification of self, "a profanation and a pollution," in which Sue breaks the unique form of herself (P 504). Her marriage to Jude is damned, says Lawrence, "partly by their very being, but chiefly by their incapacity to accept the conditions of their own and each other's being" (P 505). This is, it seems to me, an overly complex way of saying that Sue and Jude (and Paul and Miriam) are incompatible. If one of the lovers accepts the conditions of the other's being, he denies the conditions of his own being. Damnation seems inevitable, sexually speaking, for both couples. When Lawrence finally does create a sexually compatible couple of two highly developed individuals in Women in Love, he does not choose such disjunctive sexual beings to do it.

If Miriam and Sue and disciples of Venus Urania, "where desire plays only a secondary part" (J 210), Clara and Arabella hail Aphrodite Pandemos. Both of these women are creatures of almost pure physicality, and both introduce their lovers into physical manhood. Lawrence says of Arabella in the Hardy Study, "Arabella brought [Jude] to himself, gave him himself, made him free, sound as a physical male" (P 494). These women lead their lovers to knowledge of "the primal impulses that rise in them" (P 418); and Clara, like Arabella, celebrates a "baptism of fire in

passion" (SL 318) which awakens her lover to his physical self. One must remember the lengths to which Lawrence goes, in the Study, to vindicate Arabella as a healthy, generic woman of passion. He calls her, amazingly enough, "in character somewhat an aristocrat," and compares her to Hardy's Eustacia Vye! (P 490). Lawrence's reading is no doubt an extreme one, but it is of use to us to see Arabella through his eyes, for his picture of Hardy's sensual female becomes Clara in his own novel. Perhaps, in this regard, even the similarity of the sound of the names is not insignificant.

Lawrence objects to Hardy's unsympathetic portrayal of Arabella: "he must have his personal revenge on her for her coarseness, which offends him, because he is something of an Angel Clare" (P 489). In both the Study and his novel, Lawrence beautifies the blunt physicality of the two women. His picture of Clara seems especially reminiscent of the Arabella of Lawrence's essay on Hardy:

Clara sat leaning on the table, holding aloof. [Paul] noticed her hands were large, but well kept. And the skin on them seemed almost coarse, opaque, and white. . . . She did not mind if he observed her hands. She intended to scorn him. Her heavy arm lay negligently on the table. Her mouth was closed as if she were offended, and she kept her face slightly averted (SL 230).

Clara is developed as a character of generic female sexuality by the frequent descriptions of her ripe, heavy body, by frequent references to Paul's sexual desire for her,

and by a barrage of allusions to Clara as the Queen of Sheba, Eve, Juno, and Penelope. Paul often thinks of her as simply "the woman," and refers to her as a natural "force," and "strange, life wild at the source" (SL 353). Clara is imagistically linked with the great stallion of Chapter IX, a recurrent Laurentian symbol of sexuality, with the sea, and with the river Trent, which is compared to the torrential emotion of love-making (SL 363). Arabella is also revealed imagistically by Hardy; she is inevitably linked with the pig's pizzle which she throws at Jude in the opening chapter. Perhaps we can agree with Lawrence that this is hardly a sympathetic representation of the kinds of things Arabella comes to stand for in Jude.

Lawrence's analysis of Arabella concludes that she fails Jude because of her "selfish instinct for love," because she does not give herself to him (P 493). Clara's failure with Paul is similar: she is unable to give of herself, chiefly because she is afraid of Paul's changeling personality. Paul offers her no "security" or "surety," and Clara is unwilling to embrace Paul's demand for "a sense of freedom" in love (SL 360). Clara has, however, "gained herself" in her affair with Paul:

But at any rate, she knew now, she was sure of herself. And the same could almost be said of him. Together they had received the baptism of life, each through the other; but now their missions were separate (SL 361).

Clara can now accept her husband because she has gained self-knowledge through passion, and because she can feel secure in Dawes' affection. Clara is "'saved,' restored, to realization of herself as woman, and to her husband" by the fire of passion; not, as John Edward Hardy would have it, by "the artist [Paul] as savior."<sup>18</sup> This identification of the means of salvation is important because it is the center of value in Sons and Lovers: Clara, Paul, and even Mrs. Morel are given self-hood through baptism in passion. Miriam, on the other hand, seems irrevocably lost.

Jude and Paul contain the opposite poles of being which are represented by their women. Again, Lawrence sees Hardy's character in terms which seem to describe his own. As I have suggested, Jude and Paul become whole through sex, as Lawrence views it. As he says in the Study, Jude "becomes a grown, independent man in the arms of Arabella, conscious of having met, and satisfied, the female demand in him. This makes a man of any youth. He is proven unto himself as a male being, initiated into the freedom of life. . . . She gave him to himself" (P 493-494). This is precisely the point that Sons and Lovers makes about Paul, that his love-making with Clara gives him the freedom and knowledge to be himself (cf. SL 354; 361). In this act of sexual consummation, Paul establishes his male identity, symbolically assuming the dialect of his father for the

occasion. Lawrence reads Jude and writes Sons and Lovers from the perspective that makes "struggle into being" through sexual experience the controlling theme and central issue of both novels. Initially, Paul is "like too many young men of his own age" (SL 276), and in the manner of Hardy's Angel Clare who is "a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years,"<sup>19</sup> afraid of sexuality, tending more toward the ethereal and imaginative life. The "male principle" of intellection is exalted, according to Lawrence, in the Fawley family of which Jude and Sue are the issue (P 494), and it is obviously exalted in Gertrude Morel's father, "who preferred theology in reading, and who drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul; who was harsh in government, and in familiarity ironic; who ignored all sensuous pleasure" (SL 10). If Jude's being is split between flesh and mind, Paul's existence is "one internecine battle" (SL 173) between the spiritual and the physical worlds, between the male and female principles of being.

Jude, says Lawrence, is unsatisfied with either Sue or Arabella because he lacks that consummative experience with a woman which would unfold for him the mysteries of life and the self:

[Jude] wanted the consummation of marriage . . . that deepest experience, that penetrating far into the unknown and undiscovered which lies in the body and blood of man and woman, during life. He wanted to receive from her the quickening, the

primitive seed and impulse which should start him to a new birth. And for this he must go back deep into the primal, unshown, unknown life of the blood, the thick source-stream of life in her (P 503).

Whatever this mysterious "life of the blood" is that Jude craves, it is fairly obvious that Lawrence gives it to Paul, whose love-making with Clara

included in their meeting the thrust of the manifold grass stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars.\*

They felt small, half-afraid, childish and wondering, like Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realised the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise and across the great night and the great day of humanity. It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life.

It was as if they had been blind agents of a great force (SL 353-354).

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\*Lawrence's cosmic ontological view of being and sexual consummation is not complex, and might be best outlined by a few lines from a well-known poem by Dylan Thomas, who displays a similar view of reality:

The force that through the green fuse drives  
the flower

With this passage, Lawrence has rectified the 'shortcomings' of Jude the Obscure: he has given Paul the "new birth" which evaded Jude, and he has allowed his hero, as Jude was not allowed, to discover his best self where, Lawrence would say, it ought to and must be found -- in the cosmic mystery of sexual consummation.

Both Jude and Paul, it seems clear, realize their mistake in attempting to achieve satisfaction with Sue and Miriam, with whom they have so much in common, but who are, as it were, virgins by nature. Jude says to Sue, "'I seduced you. . . . You were a distinct type -- a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact'" (J 383). Love-making with Miriam gives Paul "always the sense of failure and of death," and eventually "he realized, consciously, that it was no good. It was useless trying: it would never be a success between them" (SL 292). Both protagonists, then, learn the 'conditions of being' in others as well as themselves. For Jude, this learning process is

Drives my green age; that blasts the roots  
of trees  
Is my destroyer.

The force that drives the water through the rocks  
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing  
streams  
Turns mine to wax.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb  
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

(Collected Poems [New York: New Directions, 1957] p. 10;  
11. 1-3; 6-8; 21-22).

an end: Jude is a life-story. Sons and Lovers, however, is a bildungsroman, and at its end Paul is on the threshold of adulthood. It is in this essential distinction that the fundamental differences in the characters and characterization of the two novels may be said to lie.

## V

Perhaps the most significant difference between Jude the Obscure and Sons and Lovers is the centrality in the former, and the absence in the latter of a controlling community structure. The drama of Jude Fawley unfolds in the conflict between man and society, between Jude the individual and abstract societal norms. One of the key issues of the novel is that "'social moulds . . . have no relation to our actual shapes,'" as Sue puts it (J 247); the individual is not accommodated by society. Jude moves crab-like between "gown life" and "town life" (J 162), between the rude village of Marygreen and the mystic spires of Christminster.

Jude is full of scenes which dramatize the dual nature of the protagonist's personality, -- that he is a laborer and a scholar at once. One such scene occurs at Christminster, on the night Jude has received the letter from Tethuphenay advising him to stick to his trade. Jude wanders subsequently about the city, entering a public bar full of common people, and eventually proceeding home,

choosing a circuitous route homeward to pass the gates of the College whose Head [Tetuphenay] had just sent him the note.

The gates were shut, and, by impulse, he took from his pocket the lump of chalk which as a workman he usually carried there, and wrote along the wall:

'I have understanding as well as you;  
I am not inferior to you: yea, who  
knoweth not such things as these?'

-- Job xii.3 (J 162).

Throughout the novel we see Jude "as a workman" and as a self-taught scholar, and we see the forms of society refusing to accommodate Jude's uniqueness. "The modern vice of unrest," which the narrator attributes to Jude, is a vice primarily because of society's inability, or unwillingness, to adapt to the needs and desires of "human development in its richest diversity." Jude is, to be sure, in conflict with his self; but the fundamental conflict of his life is with the "social moulds" and "formulas" of his age.

Paul Morel, on the other hand, is not involved with his community's structure. He is, of course, attempting to construct a new morality in which he can live. For Paul, however, this activity involves a withdrawal from society rather than a continued confrontation with it, as we have in Jude. Paul is not concerned with Nottingham as Jude is with Christminster. He is concerned with "Being," or "the great unknown," or some other such cosmic concept. Paul's turning toward "the faintly humming, glowing town" at the end of the novel is not, I suspect, so

much a renewed confrontation with society as it is a choice of life over death. This final decision resolves the problem of the last chapter, entitled "Derelict":

So the weeks went on. Always alone, his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and was nothing himself. Sometimes he ran down the streets as if he were made; sometimes he was mad; things weren't there, things were there. It made him pant. Sometimes he stood before the bar of the public-house where he called for a drink. Everything suddenly stood back away from him. He saw the face of the barmaid, the gabbling drinkers, his own glass on the slopped, mahogany board, in the distance. There was something between him and them. He could not get into touch. He did not want them; he did not want his drink. Turning abruptly, he went out. On the threshold he stood and looked at the lighted street. But he was not of it or in it. Something separated him. Everything went on there below those lamps, shut away from him. He could not get at them. He felt he couldn't touch the lampposts, not if he reached. Where could he go? There was nowhere to go, neither back into the inn, or forward anywhere. He felt stifled. There was nowhere for him. The stress grew inside him; he felt he should smash (SL 412).

Paul ultimately affirms life -- alone. He refuses Miriam's maternal, self-sacrificing embrace; and he gives Clara back to her husband. Jude dies a Samsonian death as a tragic prisoner in an alien society; Paul embraces his role as "a tiny upright speck" in the immense, timeless cosmos.

Raymond Williams sees the distinction here when he writes, "Hardy does not celebrate isolation and separation. He mourns them."<sup>20</sup> Jude's inability to find his just

place in the world of men is, for Hardy, the most tragic of possibilities. But Lawrence, in Sons and Lovers, in The Rainbow, and most finally in Women in Love, dramatizes the conflict of the self with itself, and celebrates the star-like singularity of the individual.<sup>21</sup> The journey from Marygreen to Christminster is a cultural and social journey, but the journey from Paul Morel's ash-pits to the "phosphorescent" city is a psychological and religious quest. Paul's trek, which will be made again by the Brangwen family in The Rainbow, moves toward individuation, self-knowledge, and self-fulfillment. The only means of transportation in this journey is love. In the physical and spiritual consummation of love the "unknown," that is, the invisible part of the person, the unconscious mind and the hidden emotions and passions, is made known, at least to the self. This is how self-hood is achieved (e.g., Mrs. Morel, Paul Morel, Clara, Tom Brangwen, Will Brangwen, Ursula, Rupert Birkin). Furthermore, not only is the journey made through love, but the "new world"<sup>22</sup> itself shall be established by the experience and values of "the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man. The via media to being, for man or woman, is love, and love alone." The struggle into individual and isolated being is the struggle of Sons and Lovers and The Rainbow; the foundation of a new world, of a modern community, is the subject of Women in Love.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Modern Fiction Studies, 5 (Spring 1959), 19-28.

<sup>2</sup>Other brief comments suggesting Hardy's influence on The White Peacock include Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), pp. 24, 27; Kenneth Young, D. H. Lawrence (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), p. 19; Anthony West, D. H. Lawrence (London: Arthur Baker, 1950), p. 112; William York Tindall, D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 201; and Richard Aldington, D. H. Lawrence: Portrait of a Genius But . . . (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>The D. H. Lawrence Review, 2 (Fall 1969), 210-29.

<sup>4</sup>Unpublished.

<sup>5</sup>p. 127. I have used the Standard Edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), ed. and with intro. by Robert B. Heilman. Hereafter cited as J in text.

<sup>6</sup>Phoenix, p. 495. Hereafter cited as P in text.

<sup>7</sup>Sons and Lovers (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 9; hereafter cited as SL in the text.

<sup>8</sup>The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 175.

<sup>9</sup>See Louis L. Martz, "Portrait of Miriam: A Study in the Design of Sons and Lovers," Imagined Worlds, ed. Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), 343-70, for an intriguing analysis of Paul's inability to see Miriam as she really is.

<sup>10</sup>Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup>Unpublished.

<sup>12</sup>This compliance, on the other hand, is Philletson's great shortcoming; see Norman Holland, "Jude the Obscure: Hardy's Symbolic Indictment of Christianity," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 9: 51.

<sup>13</sup>See Jude, part III, chap. 9, 10; IV, 5; and Sons and Lovers, p. 279. Also see Robert B. Heilman's article, "Hardy's Sue Bridehead," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 20 (March, 1966), 307-23.

<sup>14</sup>Ward Hellstrom, "Jude the Obscure as Pagan Self-assertion," Victorian Newsletter, No. 29: 26.

<sup>15</sup>Words or phrases in quotation marks are taken from the following chapters, respectively: III, 3; III, 9; III, 9; IV, 3; IV, 5; V, 1; VI, 3; VI, 3; V, 4; and V, 1.

<sup>16</sup>Quoted descriptions of Miriam taken from pages 142, 148, 153, 152, and 154, respectively.

<sup>17</sup>Phoenix, p. 496, 498. In "Hardy's Sue Bridehead," Robert Heilman says the same thing more formally, without the Laurentian jargon: "[Sue's] deficiency in sex, whatever its precise psychological nature, is a logical correlative of her enthroning of critical intellect" (319).

<sup>18</sup>Man in the Modern Novel (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. 61.

<sup>19</sup>Tess of the d'Urbervilles (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 221. After Sons and Lovers was completed, Lawrence wrote to Edward Garnett, "[t]is the tragedy of thousands of young men in England -- it may even be Bunny's [Lawrence's friend David Garnett's] tragedy. I think it was Ruskin's, and men like him" (Collected Letters, ed. Moore, p. 161).

<sup>20</sup>Williams, p. 117.

<sup>21</sup>In the Study (e.g., p. 419-21; 479-82), Lawrence continually complains that Hardy and Tolstoy allow the social code of conventional morality to punish and destroy the protagonist. At one point, Lawrence charges that this "is the weakness of modern tragedy, where transgression against the social code is made to bring destruction, as though the social code worked our irrevocable fate. Like Clym [Yeobright], the map appears to us more real than the land. Shortsighted almost to blindness, we pore over the chart, map out journeys, and confirm them: and we cannot see life itself giving us the lie the whole time" (p. 420).

<sup>22</sup>Collected Letters, ed. Moore, p. 422: "There must be a new world."

### CHAPTER III

#### CONNECTING THE OLD AND THE NEW: A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE RAINBOW

If you will go down into yourself, under your  
surface personality  
you will find you have a great desire to drink  
life direct  
from the source, not out of bottles and bottled  
personal vessels.

What the old people call immediate contact with  
God.  
That strange essential communication of life  
not bottled in human bottles.

what even the wild witchcraft of the past was  
seeking  
before it degenerated.

Life from the source, unadulterated  
with the human taint.

Contact with the sun of suns  
that shines somewhere in the atom, somewhere  
pivots the curved space,  
and cares not a straw for the put-up human  
figments.

Communion with the Godhead, they used to say  
in the past.  
But even that is human-tainted now,  
tainted with the ego and the personality.

To feel a fine, fine breeze blowing through  
the navel and the knees  
and have a cool sense of truth, inhuman truth  
at last  
softly fluttering the senses, in the exquisite  
orgasm of coition  
with the godhead of energy that cannot tell  
lies.

The cool, cool truth of pure vitality  
pouring into the veins from the direct contact  
with the source.

Uncontaminated by even the beginnings of a lie.

The soul's first passion is for sheer life  
entering in shocks of truth, unfouled by lies.

And the soul's next passion is to reflect  
and then turn round and embrace the extant body  
of life  
with the thrusting embrace of new justice, new  
justice  
between men and men, men and women, and earth  
and stars, and suns.

The passion of justice being profound and subtle  
and changing in a flow as all passions change.

But the passion of justice is a primal embrace  
between man and all his known universe.

And the passion of truth is the embrace between  
man and his god  
in the sheer coition of the life-flow, stark and  
unlying.

D. H. Lawrence, The Primal  
Passions

If the marriage of Gertrude and Walter Morel had succeeded, it might have looked something like the relationship of Tom Brangwen and Lydia Lensky in Lawrence's next novel, The Rainbow. In this novel, which unfolds the tale of three generations of the Brangwen family aspiring toward and finally reaching modernity, Lawrence employs many of the same elements of character we observed in Sons and Lovers. Furthermore, The Rainbow seems to have as its literary ancestor another Hardy novel, The Return of the Native (1878). Whether or not this new employment of Hardian themes was a conscious adaptation is of little

importance: an investigation of this parallel will illuminate the art and characters of Lawrence's novel. If we add a third element, that of developing imagination, we will have, I think, the formula for examining the characters of The Rainbow: reworking of old characters, adaptation of another writer's characters, and imaginative development toward Lawrence's self-proclaimed "new characters."

The Rainbow begins with the same metaphysical polarity with which Sons and Lovers began: "sensuous . . . non-intellectual" men contrasted by (and married to) women who have or desire intellectual consciousness (SL 9-10). Here again the characters embody the dialectical principles which Lawrence sees at the center of all life: --the conflict of the Male Principle, representing mind, knowledge, and consciousness, with the Female Principle, representing the senses, feeling, and unconscious connection with the primal impulses of life. These principles are also reversed in their embodiment in the characters, as they were in Sons and Lovers; the men embody the Female Principle of "blood intimacy" with the earth:

They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and inter-relations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow

for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men.<sup>1</sup>

And the women embody the first stirrings of the Male Principle, the desire for consciousness and articulation:

The women were different. On them too was the drowse of blood-intimacy. . . . But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm life, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the world speaking and giving utterance, they heard the sound in the distance, and they strained to listen. . . .

The women wanted another form of life . . . . She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled (R 2,3).

These generalized characterizations represent the inclinations of the men and women of the Brangwen family before 1840, but the same polarity of being exists in Tom Brangwen and Lydia Lensky, the first generation with which this chronicle is intimately concerned. Arising from this structural contrast of opposing principles, however, Tom and Lydia become "everyman" characters, representing types of men and women in the rural world of the Marsh Farm.<sup>2</sup>

Tom Brangwen inherits from his ancestors a manner of living and a mode of viewing the world which is intimately

connected to the land. He is a representative of the unconscious, rural community -- with one exception. Tom is affected throughout his life by "his mother's conception" (R 10) of what he should be, of what the good life is. Tom's mother wants him to become conscious, wants him to develop an intellective and articulate nature, and to this end she sends him to school (cf. Mrs. Morel sending William and Paul to school to escape the colliery pits). This attempt to escape the "inner world" of the Brangwen farm is a failure: "For [Tom] there was nothing palpable, nothing known in himself, that he could apply to learning" (R 11); but it is this struggle, this attempt to develop conscious being, that is the central struggle of the first three quarters of the novel.

Perhaps the issue may be stated simply: in order to achieve self-fulfillment in a modern world, one must become modern; and being modern demands a precarious balance of intellectual and physical completeness.

The demand for intellectual development apparently coincides, for Lawrence, with the coming of the machine.<sup>3</sup> In Tom Brangwen's childhood ("about 1840") the Marsh suffers an "invasion" by the machine: a canal and a railroad cut off the farm from the city, and a colliery is sunk on the other side of the canal. However,

the Marsh remained remote and original, on the old, quiet side of the canal embankment, in the sunny valley where slow water wound along in company of stiff alders, and the road went under the ash-trees past the Brangwen's garden gate (R 6).

The farm remains rural, despite the "trespass" of industry; but it does not remain untouched. The canal makes the Brangwens "strangers in their own place," and the engines of the trains are "a narcotic to the brain." The approach of the modern, industrial world induces a mixed response in the rural people:

The shrill whistle of the trains re-echoed through the heart, with fearsome pleasure, announcing the far-off come near and imminent (R 7).

The echoes of Hardy are, I think, fairly evident, though Hardy's world of Egdon Heath is only a starting place for Lawrence. The description of Egdon in the Study as "the dark, powerful source whence all things rise into being . . . , the primal impulsive body [which] goes on producing all that was to be produced" (P 418), also describes the Marsh Farm, from which all the characters spring and to which they must all return. In the Author's Preface to the 1895 edition of The Return of the Native, Hardy writes, "the date at which the following events are assumed to have occurred may be set down as between 1840 and 1850,"<sup>4</sup> and Lawrence specifically begins his story of Tom Brangwen at about the same time (R 6). Tom's father, Alfred, is a man who "followed his natural inclinations," and who is reminiscent, perhaps, of the rustics of the Heath. The Rainbow really begins, however, with Tom, who is the first Brangwen male to feel the intimations of desire to become conscious.

The first chapter of the book, entitled "How Tom Brangwen Married a Polish Lady," is about the result of those intimations. Unable to become conscious himself, Tom is drawn to dreams "of foreign parts," though he is incapable of escape from the Marsh: "it was a very strong root which held him to the Marsh, to his own house and land" (R 21). Thus when Tom sees Lydia Lensky for the first time, he says, "'That's her' . . . involuntarily," automatically voicing his desire to graph onto himself some element of the conscious world. Lydia is the high-born widow of a Polish revolutionary, and is, in Tom's eyes, from "another world of life" (R 27). Lydia is "over-conscious," "strange," and "foreign," but Tom sees their marriage as fated, and world transforming:

It was coming, he knew, his fate. The world was submitting to its transformation. He made no move: it would come what would come (R 27).

Tom and Lydia thus not only embody the male-female dialectic outlined in the Study (and apparent in the relationship of Gertrude and Walter Morel), they also represent a natural development in the "greater ordering" of the world (R 35). This marriage of the unconscious rural world to the "over-conscious" foreign one is "natural," "fated," and "ordained." The outcome of this marriage is a two-fold rebirth: first, as both characters are "reborn" (R 34) in the other, Tom gains knowledge of himself in his sexual

consummation with Lydia, just as Arabella reveals Jude to himself (according to Lawrence), and Paul achieves self-knowledge through Clara:

[Tom] let go his hold on himself, he relinquished himself, and knew the subterranean force of his desire to come to her, to be with her, to mingle with her, losing himself to find her, to find himself in her (R 90).

Tom is ultimately, however, "without understanding" and "unsatisfied" (R 124): though he marries with a part of the conscious world, he cannot himself attain it.

Second, Lydia Lensky's rebirth takes the form of a repudiation of her former, conscious life. Lydia is "relieved" at the death of her intellectual husband, and she slowly establishes a primal connection with rural England, as her "automatic consciousness gave way" (R 47). Lydia's "instinct" takes over command of her self, denying her former and consciously mental existence:

After she had been with him in the Marsh kitchen, the voice of her body had risen strong and insistent. . . .

She got to know him better, and her instinct fixed on him -- just on him. Her impulse was strong against him, because he was not of her own sort. But one blind instinct led her, to take him. . . . She felt the rooted safety of him, and the life in him (R 50).

When her first son is born, Lydia gives over her old, outside life: "She seemed to lose connection with her former self. She became now really English, really Mrs. Brangwen" (R 77). By the time her second son is born, Lydia "scarcely

noticed the outer things at all" (R 97). If the marriage of Tom and Lydia satisfies some of the longing in the former for the "outside world," Lydia herself is rejuvenated by "the teeming life of creation" of the "inner world." She finds "a new being, a new form" in order to respond to the "blind insistence" of Brangwen (R 34-35). Lydia establishes a connection with the 'impersonal forces' that drive the flowers and also drive her:

The warmth flowed through her, she felt herself opening, unfolding, asking, as a flower opens in full request under the sun, as the beaks of tiny birds open flat to receive, to receive. And unfolded she turned to him, straight to him. And he came, slowly afraid, held back by uncouth fear, and driven by a desire bigger than himself (R 51).

In fact, Lydia now enters perhaps into a deeper connection with the Marsh Farm than her husband. In a richly proleptic episode, Tom is "roused to chaos" by his inability to understand Lydia's sexual desires and periods of dormancy. He tries to assert his will over her, and in doing so rejects her "otherness," and Lydia tells him, "you take me like your cattle, . . . I want you to know there is somebody there besides yourself" (R 89). Tom, then, is not only provincial in his inability to understand the outer world of the continent, Poland, or international intrigue; he is also too provincial to decipher the cosmic sexual forces at work in the world. He cannot comprehend, or even accept, at first, the rhythms and needs of Lydia's

body nor the natural and organic expressions of her commitment to him. He is, specifically, unable "to yield himself naked out of his own hands into the unknown power" (R 53) that has all along driven him into this new and mysterious relationship with a mysterious woman. Lydia has learned, as Tom has not, that (as Lawrence says in a letter), "it is not your brain you must trust to, nor your will -- but to that fundamental pathetic faculty for receiving the hidden waves that come from the depths of life. . . . It is something which happens below the consciousness."<sup>5</sup> Tom's final reconciliation with Lydia arises from his pure acceptance of her otherness. He still does not know her foreign nature, nor does he understand her Polish past; but he is now unconsciously aware of the sexual rhythms of her being: "he knew her, he knew her meaning, without understanding" (R 91), and this unconscious acceptance leads to God:

Now He was declared to Brangwen and to  
Lydia Brangwen, as they stood together.  
When at last they had joined hands, the  
house was finished, and the Lord took up  
his abode (R 92).

Throughout the novel, we will observe increasingly conscious characters achieving self-fulfillment only when they eventually return to the roots of being. Lydia's daughter, Anna, must establish a dark connection of the flesh with her husband (R 233); and in the third generation, Ursula must satisfy the "potent, dark stream of her own blood" (R 449) in order to find wholeness of being. The point is

that, in this book where developing consciousness is the theme, consciousness is not enough. One may have a conscious awareness of the world, but one must have connection with the cosmic forces which drive all life. This is what Lawrence means by being faithful to "the unfathomed moral forces of nature":

Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth set themselves up against, or find themselves set up against, the unfathomed moral forces of nature, and out of this unfathomed force comes their death. Whereas Anna Karenina, Eustacia, Tess, Sue, and Jude find themselves up against the established system of human government and morality, they cannot detach themselves, and are brought down. Their real tragedy is that they are unfaithful to the greater unwritten morality, which would have bidden Anna Karenina be patient and wait until she, by virtue of greater right, could take what she needed from society; would have bidden Vronsky detach himself from the system, become an individual, creating a new colony of morality with Anna; would have bidden Eustacia fight Clym for his own soul, and Tess take and claim her Angel, since she had the greater light; would have bidden Jude and Sue endure for very honour's sake, since one must bide by the best that one has known, and not succumb to the lesser good (P. 420).

Only by establishing contact with the cosmic forces of nature can one "become an individual."

Consciousness, on the other hand, is not primarily a necessary condition for wholeness of being, but a product of man's developing nature. The urge to know is a secondary development in man, springing from a dissatisfaction with his primal connections with nature:

Man is stirred into thought by dissatisfaction, or unsatisfaction, as heat is born of friction. Consciousness is the same effort in male and female to obtain perfect frictionless interaction, perfect as Nirvana. It is the reflex both of male and female from defect in their dual motion (P 446).

Lawrence also explains in the Study the motivation and function of consciousness, which is, as he puts it, a lately developed habit of the human species which stems from the inevitable process of individuation:

The mind itself is one of life's later-developed habits. To know is a force, like any other force. Knowledge is only one of the conditions of this force, as combustion is one of the conditions of heat. To will is only a manifestation of the same force, as expansion may be a manifestation of heat. And this knowing is now an inevitable habit of life's developed late; it is a force active in the immediate rear of life, and the greater its activity, the greater the forward, unknown movement ahead of it. . . .

Man's consciousness, that is, his mind, his knowledge, is his greater manifestation of individuality (P 431).

One of the themes I attempted to develop in Chapter II was the mutual concern of Hardy and Lawrence for "Human development in its richest diversity." Here again we see Lawrence's interest in the manner by which individuality develops.

The proceeding quotations from the Study reveal that Lawrence believed consciousness to be a signpost of man's eternal development toward greater and more complete individuality. In order to attain wholeness of being in the modern world, then, man must find fulfillment in the mental

as well as the physical facet of the self. The Rainbow is about this process of becoming conscious in an unconscious land, about becoming an individual in the modern world. We must now turn to the second generation of the still unconscious, still "unsatisfied" Brangwen family, in order to see what direction that process of becoming takes.

## II

Anna Lensky is the daughter of Lydia and her Polish husband. She is only a small child when she comes to live at the Marsh Farm, and is thus symbolically and literally a product of two worlds. We are already aware of many of the attributes of those worlds by the time Anna becomes a principal character about one-third of the way into the novel, and this quality of character revelation, which might be called repetition with variation, stems from the organizing principle of the novel. This principle, as F. R. Leavis has pointed out, is a rhythmic one: a "movement that, by recurrence along with newness, brings continually a significant recall of what has gone before."<sup>6</sup> The reader must continually refer to what he knows of Tom and Lydia in order to understand Anna.

Anna is initially presented as a self-possessed, willful child who clings to Lydia and is "detached" from Tom. On the night Lydia gives birth to their first son, however, Tom takes Anna into his world by initiating her into the world of "blood-intimacy" of the farm. As she watches her

stepfather feed the cows in the barn, the child is filled with wonder, and "a new being was created in her for the new conditions" (R 74). This rebirth into the world of Marsh Farm parallels Lydia's earlier creation of a new self "to meet the new conditions" of the "blind" (unconscious) insistency of the rural world (R 34).

The first two years of Anna's life at the Marsh (when she is seven and eight years old) are related in Chapter III, entitled "Childhood of Anna Lensky." The girl does not truly become a Brangwen, the title implies, until Tom is able to accept the conditions of Lydia's being, and to thereby make their marriage harmonious. When this arch of marital stability is established, "the house is finished," the Lord takes up his abode, and the succeeding chapter is entitled "Girlhood of Anna Brangwen."

Anna is a rather strange creature, distant, aloof and proud, and she remains an "alien" in Cossethay and the neighboring town of Ilkeston. This strangeness is not explained, but is implicitly rendered as the result of her dual nature as a transplanted being. Anna "inherits" her stepfather's fascination with "the outside world," which she calls "the real world, where kings and lords and princes moved and fulfilled their shining lives" (R 95). Her mother's friend, an expatriated Pole named Baron Skrebensky, becomes Anna's symbol of the conscious, outside world. The Baron is described as "the first person [Anna] met, who

affected her as a real, living person, whom she regarded as having a definite existence" (R 94). (Years later, Anna will contrast "the curious enveloping Brangwen intimacy" of the "uncritical, unironical" husband with the sharp, detached objectivity of the Baron [R 195-197]). Anna is "cramped" (R 101) by the farm, and she soon falls in love with her cousin-by-law, Will Brangwen, whom she sees as a door to the outside world: "In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world" (R 109). Will inspires this hope of escape in Anna primarily through his interest in architecture.

He was interested in churches, in church architecture. The influence of Ruskin had stimulated him to a pleasure in the medieval forms. His talk was fragmentary, he was only half articulate. But listening to him, as he spoke of church after church, of nave and chancel and transept, of rood-screen and font, of hatchet-carving and moulding and tracery, speaking always with close passion of particular things, particular places, there gathered in her heart a pregnant hush of churches, a mystery, a ponderous significance of bowed stone, a dim-coloured light through which something took place obscurely, passing into darkness: a high, delighted framework of the mystic screen, and beyond, in the furthest beyond, the alter. It was a very real experience. She was carried away. And the land seemed to be covered with a vast, mystic church, reserved in gloom, thrilled with an unknown Presence (B 108).

Anna's attempt to escape to the world represented by Baron Skrebensky is, however, a failure. In the quoted paragraph above, we may find the seeds of this failure.

Will Brangwen is only "half-articulate" (R 108 and 109; Tom, we remember, was "inarticulate"), and "fragmentary"; later he is "vague," "unformed," and "subterranean." Will's interest in churches is primarily "mystical," and this unmodern sentiment does not survive Anna's hard, rational questioning, as the later "Cathedral" chapter emphasizes.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the imagery used to describe Will reveals him as a basically unconscious being. Like Anna, he is described in literally dozens of references as an animal or as animal-like. Anna is actually first attracted to Will by his animalistic physicality; like Gertrude Morel, she is seized by "the running flame" (R 109) of her lover's sensuous vitality -- by the Female Principle. Perhaps the abundant animal imagery also prefigures the final, purely sensual connection on which their marriage rests.

Will is also constantly described as "blind" or as a "blind animal," and Lawrence seems to mean by this word, instinctual or unconscious.<sup>8</sup> Will's name is also significant here; he is described as "purely a fixed will" (R 123), and is unchangeable: "He felt he could not alter from what he was fixed upon, his will was set. To alter it he must be destroyed" (R 122). The central flaw in Will's character is identified by this static fixity: he has "knowledge and skill without vision." Will is unable to convert experience into knowledge; he is unable to grow.

Anna, on the other hand, clings to her vision of "the real world":

She was bitter against [her husband], that he let his mind sleep. . . .

She, almost against herself, clung to the worship of the human knowledge. Man must die in the body, but in his knowledge he was immortal. . . . She believed in the omnipotence of the human mind (R 169).

Anna is ultimately forced to submit, however, to Will's "corrosion" (R 177, and 178): she accepts a "dark union" of sensual lust,<sup>9</sup> and retires into a "slcep of motherhood" (R 205). Anna remains "undeveloped" (R 353), and she relinquishes her vision of a greater world and becomes "a breeding animal" (R 353):

She faced the close of the affair, in which she had not played her fullest part. . . .

With satisfaction she relinquished the adventure to the unknown. She was bearing her children. . . .

If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and the moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.

She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the direction to take (R 193).

The marriage of Will and Anna is not a failure. If the disappointment of this second generation seems greater

than that of the first, it is because the expectations and aspirations of the younger couple are also greater. Anna does live "beyond her parents" (R 126) in Cossethay, one step nearer the city from the farm. And Will does, at last, develop "a real purposive self" (R 235) in his dark union with Anna. (Like her mother, Anna "gives [her husband] to himself" [R 187].) When a night school and handicraft classes are started in the town, Will finds it "supremely desirable" that he himself should teach carpentry and wood-carving to the village boys: "For the first time, he began to take a real interest in a public affair" (R 235). This new-found interest in the affairs of the community, which Lawrence later says in "Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" is an essential part of man's being, eventually leads Will and his family to Beldover, as "Will Brangwen must become modern" (R 421). The Brangwen family was "in connection with the great human endeavor at last" (R 236).

### III

Tom Brangwen's granddaughter, Ursula, is the focal point of the last half of The Rainbow. As is consistent with the structure of the novel, Ursula's childhood experiences and conflicts echo (almost, at times, to the point of monotony) those of her mother's childhood.<sup>10</sup> These early experiences, however, do not shape Ursula's character so much as does the very fact that she is of the third generation, -- that the time and family now for

reasons unknown seem ripe for full development. Listening to her grandmother talk of the past, of Poland and her coming to Marsh Farm, Ursula feels a sense of personal destiny arising from the past: "Strange, her antecedents were, and she felt fate on either side of the terrible" (R 257). Ursula is filled with a strong sense of the past (R 258) and of her unusual family heritage (R 262), and at an early age she too feels the confinements her mother had felt:

Even as a girl of twelve she was glad to burst the narrow bound of Cossethay, where only limited people lived. Outside, was all vastness, and a throng of real, proud people whom she would love (R 262).

In an emblematic scene three quarters through the novel, Ursula is confronted by two vistas which seem to represent her alternative routes toward self-fulfillment. Ursula and her "first love," Baron Skrebensky's son, Anton, are taking a stroll through Marsh Farm:

The blue way of the canal wound softly between the autumn hedges. on towards the greenness of a small hill. On the left was the whole black agitation of colliery and railway and the town which rose on its hill, the church tower topping all. The round white dot of the clock on the tower was distinct in the evening light.

That way, Ursula felt, was the way to London, through the grim, alluring seeth of the town. On the other hand was the evening, mellow over the green water-meadows and the winding alder trees beside the river, and the pale stretches of stubble beyond. There the evening glowed softly, and even a peewit was flapping in solitude and peace.

Ursula and Anton Skrebensky walked along the ridge of the canal between (R 307).

Here again we see the "blood-intimacy" of the rural, "inner world" contrasted with the outer world of "kings and princes" or "real, proud people." The country vs. the city, the Marsh Farm vs. London, and the machine in the garden: these have been the central conflicts of the novel from the first pages, and they are by now quite familiar.

The thing that makes Ursula the central character in this novel, however, is not that she gains greater understanding of both sides of this conflict than any of her ancestors (although she does), but that she ultimately rejects either of them as viable alternatives. Neither the one nor the other will do as paths to wholeness of being.

Ursula's rejection of the unconscious, blood-prescient nature of the Marsh is dramatized by her refusal to marry Anthony Schofield.<sup>11</sup> Anthony, a brother of one of Ursula's fellow-teachers at the St. Philip's Church School, is a man in the Walter Morel-Tom Brangwen mode. He is a gardener with "the eyes of a satyr" (R 413), and he is characterized as a lusty, passionate animal a dozen times in the four pages which deal with him. Most poignantly, Anthony is "like an animal moving in its unawareness," and although Ursula sees the Schofield farm as "the Garden of Eden," she knows she cannot accept the proposal of this unconscious, albeit physically attractive, farmer:

She turned away, she turned round from him, and saw the east flushed strangely rose, the moon coming yellow and lovely upon a rosy sky, above the darkening bluish snow. All this so beautiful, all this so lovely! He did not see it. He was one with it. But she saw it, and was one with it. Her seeing separated them infinitely.

They went on in silence down the path, following their different fates (R 417).

Somehow, from her heredity and her education, Ursula has become a separate, distinct, conscious being, and the development of her mind has opened an unbridgeable gap between herself and men like Anthony, or like her grandfather: "She was a traveller on the face of the earth, and he was an isolated creature living in the fulfillment of his own senses" (R 417). It is necessary to note, however, that in this journey (which Anna had relinquished), Ursula's consciousness does not prohibit her from establishing a connection with the natural world: "she was one with it" also. The added dimension of consciousness increases rather than diminishes the quality of the connection.<sup>12</sup>

Neither is the other apparent alternative, "the way to London" and the outside world, acceptable to Ursula. This route toward finding her "maximum self" (R 301) is finally rejected in Ursula's refusal to marry Anton Skrebensky, but this rejection begins with her response to the industrial horrors of Wiggiston. The "way to London," as the symbolic landscape makes obvious, is "through

the grim, alluring seethe of the town . . . the whole black agitation of colliery and railway," and at Wiggiston Ursula decides that "her soul's action should be the smashing of the great machine" (R 349). Ursula's Uncle Tom, the manager of the new collieries of Wiggiston, becomes an emblem of evil for Ursula. He is evil not merely because he is associated with the dehumanizing effect of industrialism, but because he capitulates to it: "his only happy moments, his only moments of pure freedom were when he was serving the machine" (R 349). The Wiggiston episode clearly points out that it is not the machine itself that is evil, but man's attitude toward the machine that reduces him to the level of an animal. The evil of "the industrial horror" arises from man's identification of himself with the machine, and the subordination of his life to it. Tom tells Ursula of his house-servant's late husband, a collier who has "died very gradually," and very young:

"Her husband was John Smith, loader. We reckoned him as a loader, he reckoned himself as a loader, and so she knew he represented his job. Marriage and home is a little side-show" (R 347).<sup>13</sup>

Ursula's uncle sees men as small machines controlled by the pit, which takes all of the man "that really matters."

Winifred, Tom's wife-to-be, agrees:

"It is the same everywhere. It is the office, or the shop, or the business that gets the man, the woman gets the bit the shop can't digest. What is he at home, a man? He is a meaningless lump -- a standing machine, a machine out of work" (R 348).

These attitudes reduce Tom and Winifred, in Ursula's mind, to reptiles, "great prehistoric lizards," and gives them an odor of places where "life and decaying are one" (R 350). The narrator takes up this animal imagery to describe the marriage of Tom and Winifred:

Brangwen and Winifred Inger continued engaged for another term. Then they married. Brangwen had reached the age when he wanted children. He wanted children. Neither marriage nor the domestic establishment meant anything to him. He wanted to propagate himself. He knew what he was doing. He had the instinct of a growing inertia, of a thing that chooses its place of rest in which to lapse into apathy, complete, profound indifference. He would let the machinery carry him; husband, father, pit-manager, warm clay lifted through the recurrent action of day after day by the great machine from which it derived its motion. As for Winifred, she was an educated woman, and of the same sort as himself. She would make a good companion. She was his mate (R 351).

The imagistic accusation is clear: these products of the mechanistic world come together only for propagation; they are not husband and wife, they are mates. When man allows the rhythm of the machine to replace the natural rhythms of human life, he is reduced to the level of the mindless, instinctual beast.

Ursula's futile attempt to find her maximum self, or best self, in "a man's world" of work is also dramatized by her experience as a school teacher. She links her old, rural life with the outside world when she boards the tram-car bound for Ilkeston and enters into "her new

existence" (R 368). But she finds this new world a prison peopled by the dead (R 372). The school is "evil," "unreal," and "timeless," and its pupils are "a collective, inhuman thing" (R 376). Like the colliery, the school is a reductive machine whose task is to reduce the children to automatons, to "one state of mind, or being" (R 382). Ursula adapts herself to survive in this world, but she again has a vision of apparent alternatives:

She was struggling between two worlds, her own world of young summer and flowers, and this other world of work. And the glimmer of her own sunlight was between her and her class (R 408).

The University at which Ursula becomes a student after two years as a grammar school teacher is still another negative experience for her. A year of study breaks even this illusion of the beau monde as a place to find one's best self. She begins to see even the halls of academe as a tainted marketplace, in which the professors are "middle-men handling wares," and the classics classes are "a sort of second-hand curio shop, where one bought curios and learned the market-value of curios" (R 434). Once again, disillusionment takes over Ursula's vision of the great modern world:

Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no perception of pure learning. It was a little apprenticeship where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory. . . . It was a sham store, a sham warehouse, with

a single motive of material gain, and no productivity. It pretended to exist by the religious virtue of knowledge. But the religious virtue of knowledge was become a flunkey to the god of material success (R 435).<sup>14</sup>

It is evident that Ursula's disappointments in the outer world represent the novel's insistence on the impossibility of achieving one's maximum self through social institutions, or even through consciousness alone. At this stage of her life, just before she begins to sense what the novel projects as the real center of being, Ursula's disillusionment is complete:

She had the ash of disillusion gritting under her teeth. Would the next move turn out the same? Always the shining doorway ahead; and then, upon approach, always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard. . . .

No matter! Every hill-top was a little different, every valley was somehow new. . . .

But what did it mean, Ursula Brangwen? She did not know what she was. Only she was full of rejection, of refusal. Always, always she was spitting out of her mouth the ash and grit of disillusion. . . . She could only stiffen in rejection, in rejection. She seemed always negative in her actions. (R 436-437).

Ursula is obviously not looking merely for a social role, for a career, or even for a manner of living. She is, rather, looking for a mode of being -- of being herself -- as if she were an unknown thing which was still not yet formed. "But what did it mean, Ursula Brangwen?" This is what Lawrence means by "another ego" in his fictional

characters, who are not bound by "a certain moral scheme."<sup>15</sup> The point is not that Lawrence's "new characters" are amoral: Ursula is as certainly a part of a social ethic as Dorothea Brooke. The roots of Ursula's individual being, however, exist beyond either social ethic or personality;<sup>16</sup> Ursula is a living, unique human being before she is a member of any particular social order, and the "radiant gist" of vital being transcends social structure and social development.

At this point in the novel, no doubt pressured into insight by the disappointment of her hopes and the accumulation of experience, Ursula begins to glimpse a third alternative, a third path to self-fulfillment. The narrator describes this process of apprehension:

That which she was, positively, was dark and unrevealed, it could not come forth. It was like a seed buried in dry ash. This world in which she lived was like a circle lighted by a lamp. This lighted area, lit up by man's completest consciousness, she thought was all the world: that here all was disclosed for ever. Yet all the time, within the darkness she had been aware of points of light, like the eyes of wild beasts, gleaming, penetrating, vanishing. And her soul had acknowledged in a great heave of terror only the outer darkness. This inner circle of light in which she lived and moved, wherein the trains rushed and the factories ground out their machine-produce and the plants and the animals worked by the light of science and knowledge, suddenly it seemed like the area under an arc-lamp, wherein the moths and children played in the security of blinding light, not even knowing there was any darkness, because they stayed in the light.

But she could see the glimmer of dark movement just out of range, she saw the eyes of

the wild beast gleaming from the darkness, watching the vanity of the camp fire and the sleepers; she felt the strange, foolish vanity of the camp, which said "Beyond our light and our order there is nothing," turning their faces always inward towards the sinking fire of illuminating consciousness, which comprised sun and stars, and the Creator, and the System of Righteousness, ignoring always the vast darkness that wheeled round about, with half-revealed shapes lurking on the edge.

Yea, and no man dared even throw a firebrand into the darkness. For if he did he was jeered to death by the others, who cried "Fool, anti-social knave, why would you disturb us with bogeys? There is no darkness. We move and live and have our being within the light, and unto us is given the eternal light of knowledge, we comprise and comprehend the innermost core and issue of knowledge. Fool and knave, how dare you belittle us with the darkness?"

Nevertheless the darkness wheeled round about, with grey shadow-shapes of wild beasts, and also with dark shadow-shapes of the angels, whom the light fenced out, as it fenced out the more familiar beasts of darkness. And some, having for a moment seen the darkness, saw it bristling with the tufts of the hyena and the wolf; and some having given up their vanity of the light, having died in their own conceit, saw the gleam in the eyes of the wolf and the hyena, that it was the flash of the sword of angels, flashing at the door to come in, that the angels in the darkness were lordly and terrible and not to be denied, like the flash of fangs (R 437-438).

Ursula now gives up her "vanity of the light" and ceases attempting to discover her maximum self through consciousness, "by the light of science and technology."<sup>17</sup> A few pages later, Ursula has a vision of the "special order of life, and life alone" which is "to be oneself," and she realizes simultaneously that she must find that self in

her love for Skrebensky. Again and again, we have seen Lawrence proclaiming in his art that the 'via media to the self is love, and love alone,' for only then is the self fully exposed, and only then can it become fully realized and fully known.

As Mark Spilka points out, when Skrebensky returns to England after a few years of service in Africa, "he seems to possess the darkness of that continent in his blood."<sup>18</sup> In her sensual affair with Anton, Ursula becomes generic "Woman" (R 444), as her mother had once been (R 205), and she comes to understand "the wave which cannot halt" that her ancestors had known unconsciously:

She could see, beneath their pale, wooden pretence of composure and civic purposefulness, the dark stream which contained them all. They were like little paper ships in their motion. But in reality each one was a dark, blind, eager wave urging blindly forward, dark with the same homogeneous desire (R 448).

Ursula becomes a conscious being who has rediscovered her roots, which are the roots of being for all life. The real, "impersonal" self is not the self identified by social roles, by personality, or by "a certain moral order"; it is "another, stronger self that knows the darkness" (R 452), that shares the primal, cosmic spark of life which vitalizes every living thing. Thus Ursula connects the old world with the new, and finds her maximum self by combining the conscious, urban world of London and the University with the rural, unconscious "blood-intimacy" of the farm. The novel

invites us, at least, to see Ursula as this kind of bridge-builder, encompassing as well as extending the Brangwen line:

She began to think she was really quite of the whole universe, of the old world as well as of the new. She forgot she was outside the pale of the old world. She thought she had brought it under the spell of her own, real world. And so she had (R 455).

## IV

In the last chapter of Jude the Obscure, a crowd of people who have gathered to view the Remembrance Day celebrations recognize the newly returned Jude Fawley, a stone-cutter who, they remember, once aspired to academic honors at Christminster. One of the responses Jude makes to their queries as to why he has not "done any great things" is that "'It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one . . .'" (J 366). Hardy had voiced this same sentiment seventeen years earlier in The Return of the Native, in which the narrator says, "In passing from the bucolic to the intellectual life the intermediate stages are usually two at least, frequently many more; and one of these stages is almost sure to be worldly advance."<sup>19</sup>

Lawrence renders his novel of a family passing from the bucolic to the intellectual life in three generations, and whether this design (which includes Will Brangwen's "worldly advance") is based on fact, on personal observation or on Hardy I do not know. It does appear,

nevertheless, that Lawrence has based at least part of his novel on The Return of the Native; specifically, Eustacia Vye and Clym Yeobright seem to be points of departure for the characters of Ursula and Anton. Certainly Ursula, for example, shows traits apparently inherited from her parents and grandparents, but as an individual character she seems much closer to Lawrence's view of Eustacia as he describes her in the Study of Thomas Hardy.

Lawrence sees Eustacia as a "dark passionate" character seeking her best self. What she wants, says Lawrence, "is evidently some form of self-realization; she wants to be herself, to attain herself" (P 414). But Eustacia does not know how to go about this, so she creates a vision of "Paris and the beau monde" as the high road to the self. Lawrence says, "If Paris real had been Paris as she imagined it, no doubt she was right and her instinct was soundly expressed." Like Jude's, Eustacia's idealization of a way to the self is unreal: "But Paris real was not Eustacia's imagined Paris. Where was her imagined Paris, the place where her powerful nature could come to blossom? Beside some strong-passioned, unconfined man . . . which Clym might have been" (P 416).

Like Eustacia, Ursula dreams of finding self-fulfillment in the beau monde, and is disappointed. She, too, is finally compelled to turn to a lover to find a way to her idealistic image of what "the good life" would be. Hardy's

heroine is, of course, only a starting point for Lawrence. Lawrence takes Ursula right into the beau monde, and even to Paris, to show that "Paris real was not [her] imagined Paris." The disappointments of hope in the world of work lead Ursula to "the bitterness of ecstasy" in love, dramatizing what Lawrence sees as the central Hardian theme: that "the via media to being is love, and love alone." The most significant difference between the two women is that while Eustacia is thwarted by Clym in her search for her self, Ursula is able to overcome Skrebensky's shortcomings.

Both Clym and Skrebensky represent apparent doorways to freedom for their women, and both fail their women in similar ways. Both men are, as Lawrence says of Clym, "impotent to be, [and] must transform himself, and live in an abstraction, in a generalization, he must identify himself with the system. He must live as Man or Humanity, or as the Community, or as Society, or as Civilization" (P 416). Clym and Skrebensky fail to acknowledge or appreciate the uniqueness of the individual. Ursula's criticisms of Skrebensky echo Lawrence's analysis of Clym. "What do you fight for, really?" she asks him early in their courtship:

"I would fight for the nation."

"For all that, you aren't the nation.  
What would you do for yourself?"

"I belong to the nation and must do  
my duty by the nation."

"It seems to me," Ursula says finally in exasperation, "as if you weren't anybody. . . . You seem like nothing to me" (R 309).

Later the narrator of The Rainbow gives the reader a full-scale examination and condemnation of Skrebensky's values. "What did a man matter personally?" thinks Anton. "He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. . . . One had to fill one's place in the whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilization, that was all. The whole mattered -- but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole" (R 326). We are reminded here, perhaps, of Clym's disastrous plan to provide the rustics of Egdon Heath with culture: "He wished," says the narrator, "to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of class. What was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed." Both of these attitudes follow metaphysically in the Utilitarian tradition and are rejected by the statements and events in the novels. The narrator of The Rainbow is quite explicit about this:

No highest good of the community, however, would give him the vital fulfilment of his soul. He knew this. But he did not consider the soul of the individual sufficiently important. He believed a man was important in so far as he represented all humanity.

He could not see, it was not born in him to see, that the highest good of the community as it stands is no longer the highest

good of even the average individual. He thought that, because the community represents millions of people, therefore it must be millions of times more important than any individual, forgetting that the community is an abstraction from the many, and is not the many themselves. Now when the statement of the abstract good for the community has become a formula lacking in all inspiration or value to the average intelligence, then the "common good" becomes a general nuisance, representing the vulgar, conservative materialism at a low level (R 327).<sup>20</sup>

Skrebensky fails Ursula because he fails to establish a lasting self beyond his social self; he remains, finally, content with being a role-player, a creature wholly defined by his habits, an "arrangement of forged metal" (R 443). Like Will Brangwen, Anton ultimately fails to open out into the unknown; both men exist "known" and possessed by their women. Like Gerald Critch of Lawrence's next novel, Skrebensky fails to find self-fulfillment in either his social roles or in the consummation of love, and at the end longs only for death (R 479).

Ursula, on the other hand, is like Paul Morel in that she achieves self-fulfillment through "the process of coming-into-being on the high road of love and of its unfolding in relation to the greater life of nature."<sup>21</sup> Lawrence adapts his own characters as well as those of Hardy to his purposes in The Rainbow. If Eustacia Vye is a partial prototype for Ursula, Paul Morel's quest to create a best self is of equal importance. Ursula is reborn in her love-making with Skrebensky just as Paul was with Clara,

and both are reintroduced to the primal, cosmic, Edenic forces of all life by this experience (R 451 and SL 354). The characters of Gertrude and Walter Morel, and perhaps even of Will Morel, also appear in this novel, in which the form of Lawrence's art, but not the content, is changed.

## V

Prompted by Lawrence's letter to Garnett concerning "another ego" according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, a great number of critics, from Aldous Huxley to M. L. Raina, have concluded that there are no distinctions to be made between Lawrence's characters.<sup>22</sup> I feel, contrariwise, that Ursula is quite distinct from her mother simply by virtue of the fact that Ursula develops a whole complex of responses to the world that her mother does not. If Anna may be compared with Arabella Donn, Ursula might be seen as a subtle combination of Arabella and Sue Bridehead. For at the end of The Rainbow, Ursula has achieved a unique integration of body and mind, an integration her mother had barely glimpsed.

To be connected to another, by blood or place or even sensibility, does not demand that one be 'indistinct from' or 'identical with' another. It is the case that Lawrence writes about a different part of the human being than, say, Jane Austen writes about. He spends a good deal of time in The Rainbow talking about the connection (or lack of connection) people have with the roots of all living things,

with the forces that drive the flower; but he is also constantly concerned with the individual's confrontation with inorganic things -- with social attitudes and institutions and demands. Each major character appears against a background of changing time, of great social and economic upheaval, and that change cannot take place without a corresponding change in the characters. In this novel, more than in most, environment shapes character at least as strongly as heredity. Lawrence's repeatedly proclaimed belief in the uniqueness of each individual is never really in danger in The Rainbow.<sup>23</sup> His interest in the roots of being, which lie below and beyond the socially determined self, is the key, of course, to the originality of the novel. But what Lawrence is trying to show is not that all men are alike, but that all men have the potential for achieving wholeness of being if they would but look for that unity of self in the thing which makes them men, and which makes them individual: man experiences "the primal impulses of life" in love and sexuality, and in the consummation of this experience alone can man find his true, vital self. Finally, "to be oneself [is] a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity" (R 441).

Ursula arrives at "the bottom of all things" (R 490) and, like Paul Morel, finds herself alone. She waits on the shore of "the New World" for the coming man: "The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him"

(R 493). In Lawrence's next novel, the coming man comes and the community of the new world is established.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>The Rainbow (New York: Viking Compass Edition, 1961), p. 2; hereafter cited in text as R.

<sup>2</sup>Appropriately, Anna Lensky sees Tom as embracing "all manhood" (R 102).

<sup>3</sup>This connection is, in many ways, a familiar landmark of cognitive change. In the Prologue to The Myth of the Machine (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), Lewis Mumford outlines a view of the machine as a catalyst to individual consciousness, and "the shaping of a new self. . . . This self-transformation not merely rescued man from permanent fixation in his original animal condition, but freed his best developed organ, his brain, for other tasks than those of ensuring physical survival. The dominant human trait, central to all other traits, is this capacity for conscious, purposeful self-identification, self-transformation, and ultimately for self-understanding." As early as 1829, Carlyle wrote in "Signs of the Times": "Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. . . . For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling." One of the positive effects of 'Mechanism,' he goes on later, is in the advancement of learning: "Knowledge, education are opening the eyes of the humblest; are increasing the number of thinking minds without limit."

<sup>4</sup>New York: Norton Critical Edition, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Letters, ed. Moore, p. 326.

<sup>6</sup>D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 122.

<sup>7</sup>The Cathedral chapter is a symbolic elaboration of the contrasts imminent in the characters of Will and Anna. For the best discussion of this episode, see Kinkead-Weekes, pp. 386-90, and Yudhistar, pp. 136-38.

<sup>8</sup>The many references to Will and Tom Brangwen as "blind" give credence to this sense of the word, as does the description of the young orderly in "The Prussian Officer": "It was not that the youth was clumsy: it was rather the blind, instinctive sureness of movement of an unhampered young animal. . . ." Another Lawrence short story, "The Blind Man," is about a man reduced to purely physical and instinctual existence. See Nancy Abolin, "Lawrence's 'The Blind Man': The Reality of Touch," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959), pp. 215-20.

<sup>9</sup>"There was no tenderness, no love between them any more, only the maddening, sensuous lust for discovery and the insatiable, exorbitant gratification in the sensual beauties of her body" (R 233).

<sup>10</sup>For a detailed discussion of this childhood see Yudhistar, pp. 140-60; also Edward Engelburg, "Lawrence's The Rainbow as a Modern Bildungsroman," PMLA, 78 (1963), 103-13.

<sup>11</sup>The momentary attraction between Ursula and Anthony is a replay of the initial attraction of Gertrude and Walter Morel. Gertrude "loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics" (SL 9). Ursula "knew she could move [the Schofield men] almost at will with her light laughter and chatter. They loved her ideas, watched her as she talked vehemently about politics or economics" (R 413).

<sup>12</sup>This is an aspect of Lawrence's thought that students and critics often fail to understand: the mind is only evil in Lawrence when one subordinates one's whole being to knowing. In fact, the integral incorporation of knowing with feeling is necessary to the continuing process of individuation (cf. P 431).

<sup>13</sup>Although the theme of the dehumanization of man consequent to his capitulation to the machine is a continuing one in Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris, it was initially a Germanic one. As early as 1795, in his Letters upon the Aesthetical Education of Man, Fredrich Schiller describes the "degeneration" of contemporary culture through the image of a "complicated machine": "Man . . . having nothing in his ears but the monotonous sound of the perpetually revolving wheel, . . . never develops the harmony of his being; and instead of imprinting the seal of humanity on his being, he ends by being nothing more than the

living impress of the craft to which he devotes himself . . ." ("Letter VI," Essays Aesthetical and Philosophical [London: n.p., 1910], p. 37).

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Sue Bridehead's quite similar remarks about the university at Christminster:

'Intellect at Christminster is new wine in old bottles. The mediaevalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go. . . .

'It is an ignorant place, except as to the townspeople. . . . They see life as it is, of course; but few of the people in the colleges do. . . .

'At present intellect in Christminster is pushing one way, and religion the other; and so they stand stock-still, like two rams butting each other' (J III, iv).

<sup>15</sup>See Chapter I, pt. II, of this study for the text of the letter in which Lawrence describes his 'new' characters.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Lawrence's short poem, "Escape" (Complete Poems, p. 482):

When we get out of the glass bottles of our own ego,  
and when we escape like squirrels from turning in  
the cages of our personality  
and get into the forest again,  
we shall shiver with cold and fright  
but things will happen to us  
so that we don't know ourselves.

Cool, unlying life will rush in,  
and passion will make our bodies taut with power,  
we shall stamp our feet with new power  
and old things will fall down,  
we shall laugh, and institutions will curl up like  
burnt paper.

<sup>17</sup>The novel seems a bit confused at this point, as Ursula's vision occurs with the aid of a microscope (cf. "the light of science and knowledge," by which truth cannot be found [R 437]), and that vision reveals goals she already knows (cf. R 301) and means she has already tried (cf. R 356). The point which probably needs emphasis here, however, is that now, due to her ability to learn from her

experience and frequent disappointments (as her father, for example, could not), Ursula will be able to achieve the goals she heretofore had only glimpsed.

<sup>18</sup> The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 113.

<sup>19</sup> Book III, chap. ii.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Carlyle's quite similar remarks on machine-oriented utilitarianism, in "Signs of the Times":

We figure Society as a 'Machine,' and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity! For the plain truth, very plain, we think is, that minds are opposed to minds in quite a different way; and one man that has a higher Wisdom, a hitherto unknown spiritual Truth in him, is stronger, not than ten men that have it not, or than ten thousand, but than all men that have it not. . . .

<sup>21</sup> Hochman, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> See Huxley's introduction to Letters: "Most of us are more interested in diamonds and coal than in undifferentiated carbon"; also see Vivas, p. 202: "In essence, we cannot differentiate them [the characters of The Rainbow] at all"; Catvitch, p. 40: "The outlines of their identities are left dim . . ."; Moynahan, p. 41: "[What Lawrence proposes is to] make it impossible to distinguish one character from another"; Daleski, p. 75: "Lawrence deals with three generations in order to discover what is constant in the lives of men and women"; Ford, p. 140: Lawrence is primarily interested in "the area in which all of us are approximately identical"; and M. L. Raini, "An Approach to The Rainbow," The Literary Criterion, 9 (Summer 1970), 45: "The individual characters lose their distinct identity. . . ."

<sup>23</sup> I am basically in agreement with F. R. Leavis, pp. 144-45, and Yudhishtar, p. 115-17.

## CHAPTER IV

### WORLD'S END: THE CHARACTERS OF WOMEN IN LOVE

Character is a curious thing. It is the flame of a man, which burns brighter or dimmer, bluer or yellower or redder, rising or sinking or flaring according to the draughts of circumstance and the changing air of life, changing itself continually, yet remaining one single, separate flame, flickering in a strange world: unless it be blown out at last by too much adversity.

Lawrence, "The Novel"

"In a world so anxious for outside tidiness," Lawrence wrote to one of his reviewers, "the critics will tidy me up, so I needn't bother. Whoever reads me will be in the thick of the scrimmage, and if he doesn't like it -- if he wants a safe seat in the audience -- let him read somebody else."<sup>1</sup> This fearful warning from the author of Women in Love, which Lawrence called "a potential sequel to The Rainbow," rightly advises the reader and scholar to approach this novel with great caution. Though it was finished in early 1917, the prosecution and suppression of The Rainbow delayed the publication of Women in Love until 1920. Like The Rainbow, the new novel is, as Lawrence says in the "Foreword," about "the passionate struggle into conscious being."<sup>2</sup> The Foreword goes on to articulate the essential conflict of the novel:

We are now in a period of crisis. Every man who is acutely alive is acutely wrestling with his own soul. The people that can bring forth the new passion, the new idea, this people will endure. Those others, that fix themselves in the old idea, will perish with the new life strangled unborn within them. Men must speak out to one another.

Women in Love, which was almost entitled The Latter Days (2 Timothy 3:1) and Days of Wrath (Revelation 6:17), is itself a drama of crises in which four principal characters act out in a quite limited number of scenes the principles and centers of meaning which create the direction of their lives. Each meeting and interaction between the main characters seems to have a ring of inevitability and finality about it, as if every word and gesture, every act and every response have taken on a crucial importance which will determine not only the fate of the characters but also that of the very society in which and even the planet on which they live. Each moment in the novel is one of kairos, a moment of "critical time" singled out by its participation in a pattern of highly symbolic activity.<sup>3</sup> The novel seems to work primarily on the premise voiced by its protagonist, Rupert Birkin, who thinks that "there is no such thing as pure accident," and that "everything that happens [has] a universal significance" (WL 20). The figures in this drama of crises are situated between an obsolete past and a catastrophic future of a world without human life (WL 120, 444).<sup>4</sup> Rupert Birkin's vision of "a new kind of community" in which one can be "really happy with

some few other people -- a little freedom with people" (WL 355), is certainly the only suggested exit from the dark rivers of corruption and dissolution which contain us all. Unfortunately, that new world does not seem to be forthcoming by the end of the novel, and one suspects Ursula is right when she tells Rupert, "You must learn to be alone" (WL 355). The novel is, as Raymond Williams puts it, about "the experience of loss: a loss of what, in writing, [Lawrence] himself had found -- the experience of community, of the irreducible reality of himself and other human beings. Women in Love is a masterpiece of loss, and it enacts this loss in itself."<sup>5</sup>

In this strange combination of novel-of-ideas, prophetic book,<sup>6</sup> and apocalyptic drama, character is all: character interaction is the plot, and the characters embody the structural and metaphysical poles of the novel. Lawrence's people are not simply voices, however, like the two-dimensional beings of Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point. In Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, Rupert Birkin, and especially in Gerald Critch, Lawrence created the most intriguing characters of his fiction, with the possible exception of Mrs. Morel. But before we examine the individual characters of Women in Love, let us look at two problems which concern them all: the problem of myth, and the meaning of experience.

## II

Allusion to mythical analogs as a method of character revelation is a conventional technique, but in Women in Love the uses of myth are highly ambivalent. The question is, what is the function of myth in Women in Love; or more precisely, what is the function of the half-submerged allusions to myth, the hints and scattered bits and pieces of numerous myths which dot the novel? This kind of question, especially when directed toward such central twentieth-century works as Ulysses or The Waste Land, has become a standard one for literary investigation and criticism in our age. The image of the modern artist 'in quest of myth,' in search of an archetypal, collective consciousness or mythos or tradition out of which he can create his life and art looms over the entire corpus of literature in this century. But the usual uses of myth in the art object, as a structuring device, a spatialization of the past, a standard of ironic disjunction, and so on, do not seem to be employed in Women in Love.

In 1871, Nietzsche wrote in The Birth of Tragedy of modern, disinherited man clutching at the roots of the past:

Man today, stripped of myth, stands famished among all his pasts and must dig frantically for roots, be it among the most remote antiquities. What does our great historical hunger signify, our clutching about us of countless other cultures, our consuming desire for knowledge, if not the loss of myth, of a mythic home, the mythic womb?<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, in Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence observes that "the Myths begin to hypnotize us once again, our impulse towards our own scientific way of understanding being almost spent." Lawrence shares with many other twentieth-century artists a deep sense of historical discontinuity,<sup>8</sup> and a central problem, if not sheer impossibility, for the characters of Women in Love is the task of relating the past and the present. The novel gives us an image not of the past as irrelevant (such as we see in the "moderns" of Pope's Dunciad or Swift's Tale of a Tub), but of the past as "obsolete," as Ursula Brangwen describes it in the first pages of the novel (WL 5). A sense of loathing and fear accompany Ursula's experience of the modern disease of discontinuity, but at the end of the novel her polar opposites, Gudrun and Loerke, are revelling in the sickness of historical chaos:

They played with the past, and with the great figures of the past, a sort of little game of chess, or marionettes, all to please themselves. They had all the great men for their marionettes, and they two were the God of the show, working it all. As for the future, that they never mentioned except one laughed out some mocking dream of the destruction of the world by a ridiculous catastrophe of man's invention. . . . Apart from these stories, they never talked of the future. They delighted most either in mocking imaginations of destruction or in sentimental, fine marionette shows of the past (WL 444).

In this chaotic, perverted world the great figures of history are reduced to sentimentalized puppets in a shattered

past totally void of any objective reality or value. The remnants of myth scattered throughout the novel appear in much the same denatured, discontinuous fashion. Gudrun is at one time compared to the Egyptian scarab (WL 5), and later feels as though she were "Daphne turning into a machine" (WL 108), a pregnant updating of the classical Daphne who became a tree. The Gudrun of the Germanic myths, who married the lords of autumn and winter and slew her first husband, is identified by Gertrude Jobes as a Medusa-type.<sup>9</sup> Gudrun Brangwen also becomes "a vivid Medusa" (WL 440) in the frozen mountains of Tyrol, just before she "wills" the death of Gerald. Like Daphne, Gudrun is pursued by an Apollo-type, and Gerald is also a Nordic god (WL 39-40), one of Odin's wolves,<sup>10</sup> Hermes (WL 336), Cain (WL 20), Loki (WL 173), and Dionysus (WL 94).

As these examples show, the allusions to myth in the novel, as a method of character revelation, are quite various and often contradictory. Gerald is clearly presented as a rational, Apollonian industrialist, and yet is described explicitly as Dionysus. This disjunctive use of mythic types is not an isolated incident in the novel, as my subsequent discussion of the individual characters will show. It is here that we must remain "in the thick of the scrimmage," and must make no reductive attempt 'to clear up Lawrence' through critical analysis. Lawrence's almost chaotic use of mythic allusion to describe characters has,

as I see it, two principal implications: first, it presents a clear image of a society "clutching about at countless other cultures" (in addition to the Greek, Roman, Germanic, and Christian myths, Lawrence also refers to the Egyptian, Etruscan, and African mythologies). This is not a world ordered and informed by the past, as Pope's Windsor Forest is ordered by classical myth; it is a disassociated and discontinuous world with remnants of old world-orders "shored against my ruin," as T. S. Eliot's Fisher King says. Secondly, and perhaps consequently, there is no "stable ego of personality": the characters of this novel are as complex and as various as the types they embody, even while they are representatives of archetypal forces, and Lawrence's ambivalent if not downright contradictory use of myth allows us to see his characters from many angles, and in all their richness. Gerald is both Dionysus and Apollo, and many other things; his complexity is, I suspect, Lawrence's way of making characters into "people." Furthermore, the mythic types which Gerald embodies represent universal psychic forces which operate (Lawrence would say)<sup>11</sup> in all things human. These forces represent the "primal impulses" (Ph 418) which underlie all forms of being, but Gerald is freed from the stereotype which accompanies identification with singular mythic types by the combination of many. Gerald is both symbolically and realistically lawless and law-abiding, good and evil, immeasurably strong and

pathetically weak. Lawrence's use of myth obliterates his character's personality in order to reveal the conflicts of the soul.

One of the most striking consequences of a view of the individual as driven by inner psychic forces (such as I have discussed above, and throughout this study) is a radically new view of the meaning of experience. No longer is wisdom necessarily or even probably the fruit of experience as it was in Goethe's world and that of most nineteenth-century novelists. In that century, the idea of the meaning of experience which was generally accepted was that of the good man learning through experience how to adapt his inner self "to the outer reality he faced, for the ultimate goal was selfhood within society."<sup>12</sup> In the twentieth century "the outer reality" is almost universally held to be quite secondary to and even dependent upon the inner design of the individual self, which is a reality not easily fitted to a "general idea of all mankind," as Goethe would have it.<sup>13</sup> The mysterious forces of the unconscious popularized by Freud led many modern artists to a completely different notion of the value and end of experience.

"Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end" says Walter Pater in 1873; and even earlier, as Thomas Mann observes, Schopenhauer had the idea that "precisely as in a dream it is our own will that unconsciously

appears as inexorable objective destiny, everything in it proceeding out of ourselves and each of us being the secret theatre-manager of our own dreams, so also in reality . . . our fate may be the product of our inmost selves, of our wills, and we are actually ourselves bringing about what seems to be happening to us."<sup>14</sup>

Women in Love operates on a principle enunciated by previous thinkers which becomes a common-place in the twentieth century: the conception of truth as psychological and subjective, or relative, and a notion of experience as an end in itself which does not necessarily bring wisdom and only possibly brings "unity of being" to those individuals who somehow find an integrative psychic balance within themselves. There must be an approach toward balance, but, as Lawrence warns in Fantasia of the Unconscious, "suffice to say the equilibrium is never quite perfect. . . . There is no such thing as an actual norm, a living norm. The norm is merely an abstraction, not a reality." Lawrence continues in this context to describe "a theory of human relativity," which denies the possibility of experience as normative conditioning:

We either love too much, or impose our will too much, are too spiritual or too sensual. There is not and cannot be any actual norm of human conduct. All depends, first, on the unknown inward need within the very nuclear centers of the individual himself, and secondly on his circumstances. Some must be too spiritual, some must be too sensual. . . . No man can be anymore than just himself, in genuine living relation to his surroundings.<sup>15</sup>

The very nature of being prevents experience from providing a doorway to individual and social stability or health; "true Unity of Being," as Yeats insisted, "is found emotionally, instinctively . . . [and not] intellectually, critically, and through a multitude of deliberately chosen experiences."<sup>16</sup> One finds meaning in experience itself, rather than by means of experience. The creation of the self is more "a matter of the soul's own contriving," as Mann puts it, than a result of external forces impinging upon the individual.<sup>17</sup>

With this view of the meaning of experience in mind, we can well understand Ursula's fear of marriage, which might "likely be the end of experience" (WL 1). As we have already seen in the third chapter of this study, Ursula's vision of truth in The Rainbow ("Self was a oneness with the infinite") is an emotional, instinctual epiphany rather than a categorical imperative deduced from an intellectual perusal of experience. In Women in Love, the non-rational benefits of experience are even further emphasized by the almost axiomatic inability of the characters to alter their selves or destinies even in light of the most revealing experiences. The case is almost too simply put: Gerald and Gudrun are on the road to destruction, and are unable effectively to control their imminent fates; Birkin and Ursula are likewise unable to control their own destinies, but are somewhat luckier in their prospect. One can

do no other than fulfill one's own being, and one is born either a "bird of paradise" or a "flower of mud." Gerald, who as a "soldier, explorer, and Napoleon of industry" seems a model twentieth-century man, appears simply overwhelmed by outrageous fortune which nonetheless stems from his very physiology, and which neither his vast experience nor his "superior knowledge" can combat.

In this novel, then, not only are the "primal impulses" imprisoned by the ego and the will (see my Chapter I, parts II and III) as they were in the character of Clym Yeobright (Ph 418), the very will itself is imprisoned in the nature of one's individual being. One cannot will not to will, nor be other than what one is; and if one is branded with the curse of Cain as Gerald is, one is inevitably and inextricably doomed -- because "there are no accidents."<sup>18</sup>

The meaning of experience in Women in Love is a direct result of Lawrence's aesthetic goal as I defined it in Chapter I: to portray the impersonal forces he saw operating within and between human beings (part III). By binding his characters to their fate, Lawrence achieves an aesthetic faithfulness "to the greater unwritten morality . . . of unfathomed nature." He thus avoids what he considers "the weakness of modern tragedy": the tendency of Tolstoi and Hardy to pit their heroes against society, rather than "God" or the eternal forces of nature. Gerald Crich, for example, is relatively unaffected by the moral code of his

community. He is defeated by the primal impulses of being which are locked into his self. Gerald unconsciously brings about his own demise, echoing and perhaps confirming Rupert Birkin's idea that every murdered person has been unconsciously seeking his own murderer (WL 27).

Finally, we must recognize that in Women in Love Lawrence has given up his ideal of man as a radically innocent being, and with it his Pelagian view of salvation (which I discussed in the first chapter). Women in Love repudiates Lawrence's assertion in the Study of Thomas Hardy that each individual is capable of working out his own salvation, and that "earthly life could be complete and nontragic." } cannot

Lawrence seems to be warning his reader of this shift in his view of man when he writes in the Foreword of the novel that "the creative, spontaneous soul sends forth its promptings of desire and aspiration in us. These promptings are our true fate, which is our business to fulfill. A fate dictated from outside, from theory or from circumstance, is a false fate." Lawrence's former rejection of the concept of fate is clearly overridden in Gerald's identification with Cain, which constitutes a highly important and continuing motif in the novel. Under the pressure of aesthetic honesty, Lawrence is forced to admit that man is not always in control of his own destiny, at least in so far as he is not in control of the very physiological construction of his own self. One can be flawed and fated,

as Oedipus and Macbeth were, and as Gerald is. Both the Furies which pursue Gerald and the fate that awaits him are irrevocably identified by his involuntary act of killing his brother: "Gerald was Cain . . . [because] everything that happens has a universal significance. . . . It all hung together in the deepest sense" (WL 20). Even Rupert Birkin feels that Gerald is "fated, doomed, limited. This strange sense of fatality in Gerald, as if he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness . . . always overcame Birkin after their moments of passionate approach" (WL 199). This revised notion of fate is a final denial of the ability of experience to provide an exit from the "mere anarchy" of this period of crisis which is the modern world.

### III

Women in Love is concerned with the fate of four characters who clearly satisfy Lawrence's requirements for the "aristocrat" discussed in Chapter I. Ursula, Gudrun, Birkin and Gerald each have "a real, vital, potential self," and are free of the fear of social convention. Gerald and Gudrun also seem to have that "germ of death" Lawrence sees in the aristocrats of Hardy's novels. Each of these characters is involved in the classic, and by now familiar, Laurentian struggle: the struggle into being through the medium of love. In Lawrence's highly complex method of describing this (for the most part) interior struggle lies

the supreme accomplishment and the great difficulty of the novel; as Barbara Hardy says,

Lawrence is constantly aware of the sexuality of his characters, and this often means that he does not explain affinities and enmities, as earlier novelists explained them, but relies heavily on the rhetoric of sensation. It is not merely a matter of language, but also one of movement and rhythm. Lawrence may jump from mood to mood, or from intuition to intuition, giving no rational explanation or transition but keeping the sense of vagueness and mystery often stubbornly present in life.<sup>19</sup>

Although this mimetic "sense of vagueness and mystery" adds immeasurably to the power of the novel, it also severely limits what the critic can say discursively about it. My discussion of the characters, therefore, must be understood in the context of their central ineffability.

Ursula Brangwen, first of all, is not quite the triumphant lass we left at the end of The Rainbow. Women in Love is only "a potential sequel to The Rainbow," and this remark from the Foreword shows that Lawrence is only continuing her story as if Ursula had developed in such and such a way in the three or four intervening years since her vision of "the new world." In fact, Ursula seems to have forgotten both that vision and the climactic moment of discovery at the biology laboratory, when she shouts in great fulfillment and recognition that "to be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity." Ursula celebrates her vital individuality from this moment in The Rainbow until its end, but in Women in Love she is willing to toss off carelessly this

old ideal of individuality at the faintest sound of love: "She believed that love far surpassed the individual. [Birkin] said the individual was more than love or than any relationship. For him, the bright, single soul accepted love as one of its conditions, a condition of its own equilibrium. She believed that love was everything" (WL 258). It is clear that while Birkin now represents the Laurentian dogma of the primacy of the individual over love which was outlined in the Study of Thomas Hardy, Ursula has changed her metaphysical position from that of The Rainbow. Lawrence has created a structural polarity between Birkin and Ursula by casting the latter in a possessive, traditionally feminine role: "Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by her. Let him be her man utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave -- whether she wanted it or not" (WL 258).

Ursula's name, which is the Norse counterpart of the Roman goddess Diana,<sup>20</sup> "the great mother goddess of Nature,"<sup>21</sup> reveals her symbolic position in the novel (as "Syria Dea" [WL 238], the Earth Mother and all-consuming goddess of love); it also reveals her psychic similarity to Diana Critch, who literally hugs a young man to death. When she falls from the cabin roof of a launch at the waterparty, a young doctor follows to rescue her:

The bodies of the dead were not recovered till towards dawn. Diana had her arms tight round the neck of the young man, choking him.

"She killed him," said Gerald (WL 181).

Rupert Birkin attempts to avoid a similar strangulation by Hermione and Ursula (WL 192; 247) by remaining free, an individual above all. He is specifically trying to escape from the clutches of the "Magna Mater," and he knows that Ursula wants to "worship him as a woman worships her own infant, with a worship of perfect possession" (WL 192). From the liberated, heroic young woman in The Rainbow, Ursula has been transmuted into a 'type' in Women in Love. She is now quite simply a representative of the principle of Law, as defined in the Hardy study. She is a product of the Covenant of the Old Testament God (Law), and as such is a physical, centripetal, sensual force metaphysically and structurally opposed to the male principle of Love represented by Birkin. Many readers would argue that Ursula wears these symbolic cloaks well, that she is a quite believable and well-rounded character. Even so, I do not find this Ursula the dynamic, mysterious female she was in The Rainbow. Ursula now seems to serve simply as a foil to Birkin's eschatological tirades: she is not allowed to become anything more than Birkin polarizes or argues her into being. This later Ursula is a slimmed-down version of the heroine of The Rainbow; she is now a less complex character who is a typed paradigm of normality in a novel full of unusual people.

Rupert Birkin is the judicative center of Women in Love. As in the middle section of Sons and Lovers, the

evaluations of the protagonist and the narrator are rarely distinguishable.<sup>22</sup> In most instances, Birkin and the narrator describe and judge characters in the same manner and with similar conclusions. For example, the narrator concludes the opening description of Hermione by saying, "she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her" (WL 11). A few pages later, Birkin angrily tells Hermione, "you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality" (WL 35). Later, Birkin's image of the city as hell, which Gerald scoffs at, is echoed in the narrator's description of the London streets as "hideous" (WL 54). As these instances increase in number, we realize that Birkin has the approval of our omniscient narrator, and must be considered the moral or metaphysical center of the novel. It often seems as if the entire novel is focused on Birkin's imagination, for he (and he alone) sees each character in his total individual and symbolic dimension. Birkin identifies the characters according to their mythical and sexual type (Cain, Syria Dea; lover-mistress or husband-wife), and it is his sense of apocalyptic drama that the novel seems to fulfill.

Birkin does not, however, simply occupy a "standard-supplying role in the book," as W. W. Robson would have it.<sup>23</sup> Birkin's views, even though they may be identified as Lawrence's own through the evidence of the Hardy study,

are nevertheless submitted to a good deal of critical scrutiny, convincing counter-argument, and even ridicule. As Anais Nin says in D. H. Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study, Lawrence has also created the characters "who answer Birkin, . . . and who put him in the wrong."<sup>24</sup> Most critics fail to recognize this fluidity in the character of Birkin and in the novel as a whole. Nothing has a final form in this novel, and certainly Birkin does not. We see him throughout groping, questioning, hypothesizing and then restating his hypothesis.

In one crucial example of this continuing mood of uncertainty lies the clear evidence that this book is not simply a novel about the virtues of marriage in the modern world. Early in the novel, Birkin and Gerald are riding a train to London, and Birkin asks Gerald what "the aim and object" of his life is. Unable to answer for himself, Gerald asks the same question of Rupert, who says,

"It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman -- sort of ultimate marriage -- and there isn't anything else. . . ."

"And you mean if there isn't the woman, there's nothing?" said Gerald.

"Pretty well that -- seeing there's no God" (WL 51).

This statement of Birkin's "aim and object" in life follows closely upon the narrator's summary comment on the Gerald-Rupert relationship at the time of the wedding reception at Shortlands: "They had not the faintest belief in deep

relationship between men and men, and their disbelief prevented any development of their powerful but suppressed friendliness" (WL 28). It is thus with a profound sense of discovery that Birkin revises the aim of his life in the chapter entitled "Man to Man," near the middle of the book:

Suddenly he saw himself confronted with another problem -- the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men. Of course this was necessary -- it had been a necessity inside himself all his life -- to love a man purely and fully. Of course he had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it (WL 198).

Here, and throughout the rest of the novel, Birkin realizes that, for him at least, "marriage is not enough." He is forced to confront this problem in its various guises: he himself finds "the hot narrow intimacy between man and wife . . . abhorrent" (WL 191), but he is continually confronted both with Ursula's disapproval (WL 355) and disbelief (WL 473) in his ability to establish an equally "eternal union with a man," and with Gerald's almost helpless refusal to be that man. Birkin rejects the entire society of contemporary England<sup>25</sup> primarily because he sees it as "a whole community of mistrustful couples insulated in private houses or private rooms, always in couples, and no further life, no further immediate, no disinterested relationship admitted" (WL 191). An "eternal union" with Gerald, complementary to his union with Ursula, would provide Birkin with a way out of the despised insularity of

conventional marriage. It would also provide the basis of a new community, in which all men would die "nationally . . . so that they can exist individually" (WL 387).

In England, and out of it, Birkin is trying to establish a new community based on love between individuals. As a prophet or priest, as he is called dozens of times in the novel, Birkin is Lawrence's spokesman. As a man trying to locate and deal with his problems, however, Birkin is an effective if rather two-dimensional character.

In the preceding passage concerning Birkin's revision of his goals, it is evident that the conflicts which exist between the characters in the novel correspond to the essential conflicts within each character. In this manner the obscure, inner conflicts of the self are translated into outer conflict; that is to say, the battle within the self is portrayed by the dramatic action of characters in conflict with each other. We have just seen, for example, Birkin's inner problem of his relationship with a man objectified and dramatized through his particular relationship with Gerald Crutch. The entire novel seems to be a series of dramatized philosophical problems or questions. The philosophical problem here, in the "Man to Man" chapter, is "the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men" (WL 198), as the narrator tells us, and the answer arrived at is Birkin's proposal of blutbrüdershaft with Gerald. We might propose similar problems as the basis of

most of the chapters in the book: in "Mino," for example, the novel seems to be examining the primal, 'natural' relationship between male and female by focusing on the activity of two cats. This method of literary creation, as we have seen, is really the central Laurentian way: to propose a problem, and then try to work it out in terms of fictional art. We have seen Lawrence's attempt to answer or correct or rewrite Hardy's characters and Hardy's themes; we have heard him scold Tolstoi, Joyce, Proust and Mann for a variety of sins, and we have heard him propose antidotes for the shortcomings of their art. In this novel, once again, we find Lawrence writing fiction around his own critical antidotes. In the Hardy study, Lawrence criticizes Anna Karenina for the same faults he sees in Hardy. Of Anna, as of Hardy's heroines, he asks:

what was there in their position that was necessarily tragic? Necessarily painful it was, but they were not at war with God only with Society. Yet they were cowed by the mere judgment of man upon them, and all the while by their own souls they were right. And the judgment of men killed them, not the judgment of their own souls or the judgment of Eternal God.

Consequently, their real tragedy is that they are unfaithful to the greater unwritten morality, which would have bidden Anna Karenina be patient and wait until she, by virtue of greater right, could take what she needed from society; would have bidden Vronsky detach himself from the system, become an individual, creating a new colony of morality with Anna (Ph 420).

Certainly Ursula's decision, at the end of The Rainbow, to be patient and to await "the man [who] would come out of Eternity" reflects the inclusion in his own art of the alternative Lawrence offers to Tolstoi's Anna; and just as certainly Birkin's resignation from his post as school inspector, along with his attempt to create "a whole other world" (WL 354) with Ursula, reflects Lawrence's demand that Vronsky "detach himself from the system, become an individual, creating a new colony of morality."

Yet Lawrence himself realized the difficulty of these tasks, and even his own hero-spokesman Birkin is unable to accomplish them. Birkin's dreams of establishing a lasting relationship between man and man, of "being really happy with some few other people," of constructing a new community to replace the contemporary Sodom, are not, finally, fulfilled. Furthermore, the original Vronsky figure is even more poignantly adapted by Lawrence in the character of the doomed Gerald Critch, whose misuse of the red mare at the train crossing echoes the scene in Anna Karenina of Vronsky riding his mare to death at the races.

Birkin, then, is a most effective character -- considering the role he is assigned. He has above all, perhaps, the character of a man who stands for freedom but is not quite sure where to find it. As a presenter of theoretical issues and tentative solutions, Birkin is a bodiless, static kind of character -- E. M. Forster would have called him

"flat."<sup>26</sup> Birkin's metaphysical speculations are never affected deeply by anyone in the novel, and he thereby becomes a rather static bundle of ideas. The running argument between Rupert and Ursula about the meaning of love, for example, is apparently supposed to result in some sort of compromise, a situation which would require a change of mood in the intractably dogmatic Birkin. It is difficult to see that their final understanding, however, is anything but a capitulation on Ursula's part. (In fact, by the end of the novel [WL 429], we find her expounding the same ideas -- about the priority of the individual to love -- she had earlier disputed.) Aside from the fact that he agrees to use the word "love" (because he is "tired"), Birkin undergoes no significant change in character or in doctrine.

Birkin's internal flexibility, on the other hand, which I have discussed above, raises him above definition as an idea or set of ideas, and provides his most striking moments in the novel. It is important to remember the pattern of conflict outlined earlier. Birkin's self-conflict is dramatized primarily by his conflict with Hermione, who represents both the kind of existence he is rebelling against and the mode of living to which he is closest.

Hermione's sin, as both Rupert and the narrator see it, is an inability to respond to the world with anything

other than her conscious mind: "She was a woman of the new school, full of intellectuality and heavy, nerve-worn with consciousness" (WL 10). She is the most severe and most negative adaptation of the Sue Bridehead figure Lawrence ever attempted,<sup>27</sup> and she represents an extreme, decadent culmination of the character type we have seen in Mrs. Morel, Miriam, and Anna.

Hermione and Rupert have been intimate acquaintances for a long time and, as the story begins, Birkin is attempting (even before he meets Ursula) to break off his relationship with Hermione, who he says has "no sensual body of life" and who cannot therefore provide for either herself or her lover "the paradisal entry into pure, single being" (WL 247). Hermione is not only an emblem of Birkin's previous way of life, she is also a representative of the past and of the dying civilization of contemporary England. Her country home at Breadalby is a symbol of an extinct way of life based on the past, which denies both life and spontaneity to the present. "There seemed a magic circle drawn about the place, shutting out the present, enclosing the delightful, precious past, trees and deer and silence, like a dream," thinks Ursula pleasantly, but she is soon horrified by the stale, "saurian . . . primeval world of Breadalby, whose inhabitants remind Gudrun of great reptiles long extinct, and Birkin of figures in some Egyptian tomb. Here life is reduced to "a game of chess," where all is

known and mechanical (WL 92). As "priestess" (WL 83) and keeper of this obsolescent zoo (WL 94), Hermione represents the state of mental consciousness which is unattached to any spark of life or being (which Lawrence so deplores in the fourth chapter of the Hardy study). It is interesting to note that Rupert is her peer in "this ruthless mental pressure, this powerful, consuming, destructive mentality that emanated from Joshua and Hermione and Birkin and dominated the rest" (WL 83). From this essential connection of mentality, it is evident that Birkin's subsequent break with Hermione is also a break with his own past.

Furthermore, each of the characters at Breadalby is judged by his attitude toward the past. Those who treasure and defend the past are described as stiff, wooden creatures, and as primeval reptiles. The Brangwen girls and Birkin alone survive this imagistic condemnation, although later in the novel Gudrun and Loerke continue the theme of the past as a "sentimental marionette show" of little or no value to the present. In fact, as David J. Gordon points out, in the latter part of the novel "Loerke has taken over the functions of Hermione,"<sup>28</sup> continuing her sense of a profound and life-denying inner emptiness.

Loerke, who has been persuasively compared to Dostoevsky's Svidrigaylov,<sup>29</sup> is both a caricature and personification of evil. As Gerald Ford points out, Loerke's name

derives from Loki, whom William Morris describes in Sigurd the Volsung as "the World's Begruder, who maketh all labor vain."<sup>30</sup> In the Norse sagas, Loki is a combination of the Devil, Cain, and Proteus: "His gifts to the first human pair were desires, longings, passions. . . . He was cunning, fickle, foul-mouthed, jealous, a mischief-maker, slanderous, and a thief. He transformed himself into a bird, flea, fly, giantess, mare, milk-maid, salmon, seal . . . . He slew his brother and is the analog of Cain."<sup>31</sup> Like Hermione, Loerke fears the passage of time and tries to deny the future by the force of his will (WL 91, 444). This denial of passing time and time to come, in which Gudrun also participates, is a denial of what Mark Schorer calls the "historical embodiment" of "'Being' (that integration of the total self which is life)."<sup>32</sup> Throughout the novel, the organic, life-bearing forces of being are in conflict with the death-dealing forces of the will which deny the organic dimension of passing time. Hermione is surpassed only by Loerke in her addiction to the pleasures and powers of the will. For both characters, everything, even happiness itself, is "a matter of will" (WL 288).

Loerke's protean appearance suggests his lack of any "center of being" or, perhaps, his lack of any real being at all. This epicene artist is described (within two pages!) as a magpie, arab, gnome, small boy, old man, rabbit, troll, bat, bird, and a dog (WL 412-413). Later

he is described as a flea, a snake, an elf, a pixie, and a seal. This last transformation is most revealing, in that it is the central symbol of Loki, who is the only mythological deity to assume that form. As a seal, Loki and Loerke become gods of the frozen north and emblems of the process of artic dissolution in which, according to Rupert Birkin, the whole of Western civilization is involved.

Furthermore, the image of Loerke as a seal is one of a number of imagistic links which connect him to Gerald. In "Waterparty," Gerald emerges from the river, after searching unsuccessfully for his drowned sister, in Loki's unique guise: "He looked like a seal. He looked like a seal as he took hold of the side of the boat. . . . He sat slack and motionless in the boat, his head blunt and blind like a seal's, his whole appearance inhuman, unknowing" (WL 175). The similarities between Loerke and Gerald are striking, and it appears that the former is an extreme portrait of one aspect of the latter. Gerald's inhuman mistreatment of the horse at the railway crossing is recalled by Loerke's similarly brutal treatment of the horse in his statuette. Loerke's assertion that his horse is only "a part of a work of art, [having] no relation to anything outside that work of art" (WL 420) is the aesthetic formulation of Gerald's view that the mare he has tortured at the railway crossing exists only "for my use" (WL 130). Both

men use animals (and people) as means rather than as ends, 2 and assign value to beings in proportion to the ease with which that being fits into their "work."

Loerke and Gerald center their lives around work, and if Gerald is the paradigmatic ruler of the industrial world, Loerke is its leading artist: "The machinery and the acts of labor are extremely, maddeningly beautiful," says Loerke, who enjoins man to enjoy "the mechanical motion of his own body," and declares there is "nothing but work" in the meaningful life (WL 414-415). Like Gerald, Loerke is a "high priest" of the "god of the machine" (WL 223, 415), who rules over life subjected "to pure mathematical principles." We have previously seen this same kind of subjection of the body and soul to the machine in Tom Brangwen, Jr., of The Rainbow, who, like Gerald, defines men by their function (above, Chapter III, pt. III). Gerald agrees with Loerke that value and usefulness are one: "As a man as of a knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered" (WL 215).

The primal impulse for the mechanical religion of Loerke and Gerald is the individual will, whose primary function is to acquire and assert power and control. When Loerke tells Gudrun of how he slapped his model for Lady Godiva into submission, Gudrun gives him the same look of "supplication, almost slave-like," that she gives Gerald when he digs his spurs into the mare's side at the railway

crossing. Gudrun is attracted by the power of their wills, and both men strive above all for the pure fulfillment of their own will against "the resistant Matter of the earth" (WL 220).

Thus Loerke is not only an extension of the forces introduced by Hermione, he also extends and reveals many of the forces at work within Gerald Critch. In fact, Loerke seems to encompass all of the kinds of evil we see in the novel. As the sexually perverted, willful, machine-worshipping German, he is the most clearly <sup>malign</sup>daemonic force in the novel. He owes his strength as a novelistic character, however, to Gerald, whom he both extends (into abstraction) and interprets. Loerke is an effective character because he portrays a kind of being we have already seen sporadically in Gerald, and in Gudrun. Loerke's two-dimensional vileness is protected from lapsing into parody by the fact that it intensifies the same kind of "daemonic force" (WL 233) the portrait of Gerald has presented in a more complex form.

Gerald Critch is the central character of Women in Love, and it is in the masterful characterization of him that this novel becomes most memorable. Gerald is at once an evil and an appealing man, and although he represents the way of death (as contrasted to Birkin's way of life), he is always drawn sympathetically as a man of great

strengths and great weaknesses. If the characterization of Birkin is weakened by a continual reliance on expository monologue, certainly the portrait of Gerald is not.<sup>33</sup> In scene after striking scene, the forces which drive Gerald are rendered in terms of dramatic action -- action which supports its symbolic meaning a good deal more easily than do the grandiloquent pronouncements of Birkin. Gerald acts out his symbolic parts, whether he is swimming (in "The Diver" chapter) "like a Nibelung" and a "water god," or surfacing like a slick seal (Loki) from his desperate but futile attempt to ward off tragedy from his doomed family. Certainly Gerald's subjugation of the red mare at the railway crossing and the rabbit at Shortlands is an excellent translation of the "will to power" into terms of dramatic action.

Nevertheless, it is Rupert Birkin's imagination which raises Gerald to the level of a symbolic figure and gives him an importance far beyond that of an egocentric industrial magnate. As I have said before, Rupert sees Gerald as "fated, doomed, limited . . . as if he were limited to one form of existence . . . a sort of fatal halfness." Gerald's form of existence centers upon what Lawrence describes in the Hardy study as the later developments in man -- the habits of knowing and willing (Ph 431). Like Hermione and Loerke, Gerald is driven by the forces of the will, and is unable to achieve "pure integral being" either

in his self or with other selves. His one successful attempt to "lapse out" into pure being, as Birkin advises, is cut fatally short by the drowning of his sister (WL 37, 170). Rupert perceives Gerald as a representative of Occidental man, symbolizing that civilization's inability to achieve an "organic" wholeness with life (WL 246). This failure stems from the life-denying activity of "abstraction . . . destructive knowledge," in which the particular and the organic and the individual are denied. For Birkin, Gerald becomes a modern analog to the West African statuette they had both seen at Halliday's in London. This statuette represents the extreme limit of human sexual experience, a metaphysical point in time in which "the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all one sort, mystically sensual . . . knowledge arrested and ending in the senses" (WL 245). Gerald is the other side of the coin, representing that metaphysical counterpoint where knowledge is only in the head, and has no connection with the physical body. In this kind of being, even sexuality is a mental activity and desire is controlled by the will. Both extremes lead to destruction,<sup>34</sup> and "whereas the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the putrescent mystery of sun-rays," Rupert sees Gerald as a frightful Hermes announcing an end to our Northern, mental culture:

He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow? (WL 246-247).

As a creature doomed to destruction, Gerald encompasses all the "doomed" characters of the book. Marked by Cain, he himself acknowledges the inevitability of disaster in his life: after Diana's death at the water-party, Gerald says, "There's one thing about our family, you know. Once anything goes wrong, it can never be put right again -- not with us. I've noticed it all my life -- you can't put a thing right, once it has gone wrong" (WL 176). Gerald's "family" really includes all the Gerald-types in the book -- Hermione, Gudrun, Minette, Mr. Critch, and Loerke. For each of these characters, consummation can be reached only through wilful violence. They must strike rather than caress their "beloved," because will dominates desire. Thus Hermione hitting Birkin with the lapis, Gudrun slapping Gerald, Minette knifing the young man in the café, Mr. Critch imprisoning his wife and Loerke beating his model are all acts of lovers who cannot love. When Gerald tracks the clay of his father's fresh grave into Gudrun's bedroom we have, as Mark Schorer says, "love as death" (the chapter is entitled "Death and Love").<sup>35</sup> When Hermione strikes Birkin in the study at Breadalby, she

feels "a perfect, unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction" (WL 98), and this motif of consummation as destruction continues throughout the novel to be the central image of spiritual death. At the end, in the Alps, Gerald feels "the pure zest of satisfaction" as he strangles Gudrun, and her death is "the apply of his desire" (WL 463). This is the process of "love as death" resolving itself, and the tone of inevitability in the novel grows even stronger as Gudrun "sends" Gerald off to his pathetic suicide in the snow-covered mountains.

And here we have come down to it, to the essential aesthetic fact about Lawrence's characters, toward which he had been pointing since he began Sons and Lovers. Disdaining the "traditional form of the novel," which for Lawrence meant a tale about the social interactions of a number of people (in the manner of Bennett, Galsworthy, etc.), Lawrence is trying to write about pure being as it exists beneath the trappings of social convention.<sup>36</sup> And he has found only two essential kinds of being, one of which leads to dissolution, and one of which can lead to integration. The characters, then, become types, at least as far as Lawrence's speculative and prophetic thought is concerned; and this aspect of his novels becomes increasingly important in subsequent novels. (In Lady Chatterley's Lover [1928], for instance, it is not the characters themselves that we care about, but what they

stand for; so that the novel becomes an explicit allegory built on the equally allegorical framework of the seven seals of the Apocalypse.) These types of characters are viewed, as F. R. Leavis puts it, in "a kind of latent drama of fields of force,"<sup>37</sup> and each scene of the novel is an attempt to discover the forces operating within the unique field of each individual. Like the characters in William Carlos Williams' novels, Lawrence's people "are not fixed personalities persisting through time, but are flowing centers of strength, polarizing themselves differently according to each situation."<sup>38</sup> Each character adjusts his "personality" (Ph II, 513) at each encounter with another person (cf. Gudrun "acting her role," WL 182, 275, 328, 444, 467), and only through an examination of many of these encounters can the buried self be known. The problem is somewhat simplified by Lawrence's belief, as he outlined it in the Hardy study, that there are only a few "primal impulses," and they are shared by all the characters in varying degrees of strength. Thus a character like Gudrun, for example, is easily comprehensible when we understand Gerald and Hermione. Although Gudrun has a quite distinctive individuality, that individuality seems less important in terms of the whole novel than the fact that she shares the preoccupation of Gerald and others with her own will (WL 437). Like Medusa, to whom she is compared, Gudrun's central concern is her desire for mastery over others: "She wished she

were God, to use [Gerald] as a tool" (WL 408). Gudrun's "unconquerable desire for deep violence against him" (WL 162) reveals that her affection for Gerald is grounded in hate rather than in love, although she says that "love is one way of putting it" (WL 163). (As Lawrence has emphasized time without number in the novels, love and hate are distinguishable only at the very roots of being.) The "type" of forces which drive Gudrun, we know by now, can lead only to death. .

## IV

There are a good many readers who object to the simplicity of this novel of life against death in which one kind of character is mysteriously but explicitly destined for extinction (WL 470) and another kind seems (just as mysteriously) destined to be able to affirm life and thus survive. More unhappily, a large number of critics have refused to accept the simplicity of these alternatives, and have gone about trying to explicate Lawrence by confusing the issues. But the narrator of Women in Love tells us quite directly that the problem is "fatally simple" (WL 245). On the one hand, there are two kinds of destruction: the West African sensuality, and the Nordic "frost-knowledge." On the other hand, there is "the way of freedom":

There was the paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union,

stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connection with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields (WL 247).

→ Whether or not Birkin and Ursula achieve this state of "pure, single being" we are not told. As David Daiches has said, "the novel ends on a question,"<sup>39</sup> which is exactly right for this novel. Whether they are discussing society, the will, or Western man, the essential conflict between Gerald and Birkin is that of mechanical vs. organic form (WL 220). Only the organic principles, according to Birkin and the novel, lead to truth, and organic form has no end. As Lawrence says in the Study of Thomas Hardy, "whenever art or any expression become perfect, it becomes a lie. For it is only perfect by reason of abstraction from that context by which and in which it exists as truth" (Ph 475). To become abstract about the future, or even the present, of Ursula and Rupert would be to lie about them, so they must be left "in media res," with other problems to face.

Although Women in Love does not erect a new world upon the ashes of the old, neither does it end in complete apocalypse. Birkin and Ursula are left squarely in the middle of what Lawrence seems to believe is the prevailing human situation in the modern world: the old forms of life

do not work, and new ones do not appear. Birkin tells Ursula that they too, like Gerald and Gudrun, are involved in "the dark river of dissolution" which leads progressively to the end of human life (WL 164). This process will lead, says Birkin, to "a new cycle of creation after -- but not for us. If it is the end, then we are of the end." A few scenes later, Gudrun and Gerald mock Birkin's high-flown pronouncements:

"-- he says he believes that a man and a wife can go further than any other two beings -- but where is not explained. They can know each other, heavenly and hellish, but particularly hellish, so perfectly that they go beyond heaven and hell -- into -- there it all breaks down -- into nowhere."

"Into Paradise, he says," laughed Gerald (WL 282).

The skepticism of Gudrun and Gerald is not only cutting (Birkin is listening to this conversation), it is also in a sense endorsed. The question raised by this (by no means untalented) couple is whether any man and woman could actually achieve such outlandish goals. In fact, "what the entire novel tends to suggest," as Colin Clarke puts it, "is that the kind of fulfillment or completeness that Birkin aspires to is both necessary and impossible."<sup>40</sup> Birkin's most drastic view of things seems finally correct: in order for "the new world" to come into existence, human beings as they now exist must be swept away from the face of the earth.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>Letters, ed. Moore, pp. 826-27.

<sup>2</sup>Women in Love (New York: Viking Phoenix edition, 1960), p. viii; hereafter cited in text as WL.

<sup>3</sup>See Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 35-64, for his insightful discussion of kairos ("moments of crisis") as opposed to chronos ("passing time").

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Monroe K. Spears' discussion of the expectation of fin du globe common among writers at this time, which accompanied a feeling of historical discontinuity Spears sees as central to modernism: "The feeling was very widespread that World War I marked the end of a major era, if not of civilization," Dionysus and the City: Modernism in Twentieth-Century Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 29.

In The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances (Toronto: n.p., 1961), Bernard Bergonzi explores this apocalyptic pessimism in Wells' works of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Also cf. the poetic embodiment of the feeling that the whole human enterprise is likely to end at any moment, or to continue only in some non-human or inhuman mode, in W. B. Yeats' "The Second Coming" -- "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/ . . . / Surely some revelation is at hand;/ Surely the Second Coming is at hand./ . . . / And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,/ Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?" -- and in Ezra Pound's Mauberly, which repudiates the whole "botched civilization" of the Western world:

Christ follows Dionysus,  
Phallic and ambrosial  
Made way for macerations;  
Caliban casts out Ariel.

<sup>5</sup> The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Although a good many critics attempt to separate Lawrence the prophet from Lawrence the artist, I suspect this neither can nor should be done. While writers of fiction are (especially after Henry James) often expected to create a heterocosm, a world parallel to but distinct from the "real" one, the late Sir Herbert Read regarded almost the whole of modern painting and sculpture as an art of prophecy and outcry, "an art of protest -- protest against a barbarous civilization that is indifferent to all spiritual and esthetic values;" Letter to a Young Painter (London: n.p., 1962), p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 137.

<sup>8</sup> See Spears, pp. 20-34, 264-65.

<sup>9</sup> Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1961), p. 694.

<sup>10</sup> When she first sees Gerald, Gudrun says to herself, "His totem is the wolf" (WL 9), and this motif is continued throughout the novel (WL 154-155, 208, 404). At their arrival in the Alps, Gudrun exclaims, "my God, Jerry, you've done it now" (WL 338), which is perhaps an allusion to "Geri," one of the two wolves who sat at the foot of Odin's throne.

<sup>11</sup> And so would C. G. Jung: "Myths are first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul;" all the "mythologized processes of nature . . . are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection." The archetypes are "structural elements of the human psyche in general"; Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. W. S. Dell and C. F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1933), pp. 215-16.

<sup>12</sup> "Escape from the Circles of Experience: D. H. Lawrence's The Rainbow as a Modern Bildungsroman," PMLA, 78 (1963), 103. Though this article adeptly identifies the problems involved in discussing changes in the meaning of experience, it seems ultimately to equivocate the distinction between the nineteenth- and twentieth-century forms of acquiring wisdom.

<sup>13</sup> Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann, tr. John Oxenford, ed. J. K. Moorhead (New York: Everyman's Library, 1951), p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> Mann is paraphrasing the argument of Schopenhauer's essay, "Transcendent Speculations on Apparent Design in the Fate of the Individual," in his own essay entitled "Freud and the Future" [1936], Essays of Three Decades, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 311.

<sup>15</sup> New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922; pp. 40-41.

<sup>16</sup> The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats (New York, 1953), p. 148.

<sup>17</sup> "Freud and the Future," p. 311.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence seems to agree with Sartre that "existence precedes essence," that man "is what he wills . . . [and] is nothing else but that which he makes of himself" ("Existentialism is a Humanism," collected in Walter Kaufmann's Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre [New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956], p. 261). A "messenger of destruction," as Rupert Birkin calls him, Gerald achieves final self-fulfillment in death.

<sup>19</sup> The Appropriate Form (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> Jobes, p. 1630.

<sup>21</sup> Bulfinch's Mythology (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1947), p. 899.

<sup>22</sup> See my Chap. II, pt. II; and Louis Martz's article, "Portrait of Miriam: A Study in the Design of Sons and Lovers."

<sup>23</sup> "D. H. Lawrence and Women in Love," The Modern Age (Baltimore: Penguin, 1961), p. 290.

<sup>24</sup> London: Spearman, 1961; p. 102. Also see Leavis, p. 176.

<sup>25</sup> See Frank Kermode's discussion of Birkin's meditations on "the necessary death of England"; Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types," Critical Quarterly, 10 (1968), 21-22.

<sup>26</sup> See Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1927), pp. 103-08, for Forster's famous discussion of "flat" and "round" characters.

<sup>27</sup> Appropriately, Ursula calls Hermione one of Birkin's "spiritual brides" (WL 298).

<sup>28</sup>"Women in Love and the Laurencean Aesthetic," Twentieth Century Interpretations of WOMEN IN LOVE, ed. Stephen J. Miko (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 58.

<sup>29</sup>Mark Schorer, D. H. Lawrence (New York: Dell, 1968), p. 43.

<sup>30</sup>Quoted by Ford, Double Measure, p. 196.

<sup>31</sup>Jobes, p. 1010.

<sup>32</sup>Schorer, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup>That is, not essentially: Lawrence does rely primarily on statement when he discusses Gerald's past, but he confirms the narrator's assertions about Gerald by continuing the themes of the past in the dramatic action of the present.

<sup>34</sup>My reading of this symbol stands in direct contradiction of those critics, led by Horace Gregory (see Pilgrim of the Apocalypse [New York: Viking, 1933], pp. 45-47), who interpret the African statuette as a symbol of normative value.

<sup>35</sup>"Women in Love," The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Harry T. Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 171.

<sup>36</sup>Lawrence would be in exact agreement with Nikolai Berdyaev, who felt that "too often, to other people, society and civilization man presents his superficial ego, which is capable of various sorts of external communication, but not capable of communion"; Slavery and Freedom, trans. R. M. French (New York: Scribners, 1944), p. 25.

<sup>37</sup>Leavis, p. 232.

<sup>38</sup>J. Hillis Miller, Poets of Reality (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 323.

<sup>39</sup>The Novel and the Modern World (Chicago: University Press, 1960), p. 169.

<sup>40</sup>River of Dissolution: D. H. Lawrence and English Romanticism (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), p. 110.

## CHAPTER V

### FROM ART TO AXIOM: LAWRENCE'S LESSER NOVELS

. . . after us, the Savage god . . .  
Yeats

Lawrence's critics are almost unanimous in their belief that his career as a major novelist ends with Women in Love. Infrequent disclaimers arise in the case of Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), but The Lost Girl (1920), Aaron's Rod (1922), Kangaroo (1923), and The Plumed Serpent (1926) have rarely found champions: No one defends them, that is, as novels. There are a good many critics, on the other hand, who find these books quite interesting for what they reveal about Lawrence and his theories -- political, spiritual, and ontological -- and certainly these last novels are filled with the lore of the cult Lawrence has come to represent in the popular mind. Most critics who examine these books take the tack originally determined by F. R. Leavis, who examines the lesser novels as though they were a kind of spiritual autobiography. In the representative case of Aaron's Rod, for example, we come to the central critical question Leavis asks about this novel (and will ask in a similar fashion about the others): "What, then, is the nature of the theme that is

centered in Aaron, and what relation does Aaron bear to Lawrence himself?"<sup>1</sup> Since the first question is discussed only in terms of the second, it becomes obvious that, for Leavis, this book is meaningful primarily when read in terms of Lawrence's spiritual journey. Other critics have followed Leavis' lead, greatly aided by the immense amount of biographical material collected in Edward Nehls' three-volume work, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, published in 1957-1959.<sup>2</sup>

Most recent critics, however, seem to concur with Eliseo Vivas' demand that criticism of Lawrence's novels concern itself with the novels and not with the author.<sup>3</sup> This has been the major trend in Laurentian criticism since Vivas' D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and Triumph of Art was published in 1960. Although the critics of the last decade have not always been willing to accept Vivas' judgment that Lawrence's "body of ideas . . . is a mixture of sense and nonsense, when it is not a mixture of wisdom and corruption," they have seldom attempted to remove the novels after Women in Love from Vivas' "failure" category.<sup>4</sup> R. P. Draper, for example, declares that "the novels which follow Women in Love are of unquestionably inferior quality," and labels them "pseudo-novels."<sup>5</sup> Keith Sagar echoes this sentiment, describing the same works as "decidedly inferior."<sup>6</sup> H. M. Daleski says that after The Rainbow and Women in Love, "Lawrence is no longer concerned with form in the novel."<sup>7</sup> Thus we see that both

schools of Laurentian critics, the biographical critics and the formalists, have few favorable comments to make on the artistic merit of the later novels. Whatever Lawrence is doing in these books, the general consensus runs, he is not truly writing novels.

After Women in Love, Lawrence no longer writes novels, I suspect, because he no longer creates characters with any plausible degree of self-sufficiency. Or, to put it another way, Lawrence seems simply unable to create characters who have a "life" of their own. The charge of "a lack of aesthetic distance" is frequently leveled at Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent, as well as Lady Chatterley, and it is not to be denied.<sup>8</sup> The drift of this charge is that Lawrence created images of himself in the major characters of the later novels, and that he simply gives those images his own words and thoughts to use.<sup>9</sup> And yet, we may ask, are Aaron, Somers of Kangaroo, Kate of The Plumed Serpent, or Mellors of Lady Chatterley really any more "autobiographical figures" for Lawrence than was Paul Morel? And are Lilly of Aaron's Rod (whom Hough calls "Lawrence the Prophet"), Kangaroo, or Don Ramon and Cipriano of The Plumed Serpent any more "mouthpieces" or "spokesmen" than Rupert Birkin? I think the answer is no. The real failure is not that the characters are autobiographical, but that they are only that; that they have no life of their own.

All of Lawrence's best novels depend essentially on character, because they are primarily about human beings in the throes of experiencing other human beings "in the palpitating moment." In the later novels, however, Lawrence is less concerned with the drama of passional experience than with the psuedo-drama of intellectual debate. The novels become all argument, abstraction and theorizing as the characters talk about fascism and socialism as if their sexual happiness essentially and particularly depended on this or that political program. Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent are novels about theories, not about people. It does not matter so much that these politico-spiritual theories seem simply absurd to most readers -- good novels can survive bad theories (cf. The Way of All Flesh, which is grounded upon the evolutionary theories of Lamarck). The real problem is that the characters are only voices talking about abstractions which seem to have no connection with their everyday lives. Aaron Sisson, for example, doesn't really understand when Lilly proposes a totalitarian political order as an answer to man's varied sexual needs. Lilly doesn't make this clear to Aaron, and no one makes it clear to the reader. (Later, of course, Lawrence himself rejects the notion.) What's really going on here? Where are we? Where, more importantly, are the characters? Where is Richard Somers of Kangaroo at the end of that novel? Sailing off to the New World because he can

make no sense of the Old? Or does Kate Leslie's rejection (in The Plumed Serpent) of the dark, phallic gods of Mexico signal the end of the New World too?

I confess that I don't know. It is obvious that the characters themselves don't know. Whatever direction they are headed in during the novel and at its end, it does not seem to be a self-motivated one, even when aided by the most obliging suspension of disbelief. When the discussion of the theory is finished, the book's characters seem to collapse, like abandoned puppets.

It is most inviting to assert that the characters seem to suffer most from the imposition of Lawrence's post World War theories, which differ from his earlier theories in that they attempt to outline a way of living life rather than a way of finding it. In a sense, Lawrence's best works ask "How does the good man live his life?"; and the later, less successful novels assert "This way!" The later novels, that is, dramatize an answer rather than a quest: they impose a theory on life by imposing a certain life on their characters. In contrast, we know in Women in Love that it is Rupert Birkin who rejects the kind of "natural" relationship to Ursula which is dramatized in the "Mino" chapter: it is Birkin who is bewildered by the failure of his own proposed blutbrüdershaft with Gerald. But in the subsequent novels, it is not the characters who reject (or even accept) abstractions: it is Lawrence.

I will not belabor this study with a prolonged discussion of the characters (whom Graham Hough describes as "posturing dummies"<sup>10</sup>) of the four novels published after Women in Love, but I would like to speak briefly about Lady Chatterley's Lover, which is widely accepted as Lawrence's fourth best novel. Lady Chatterley certainly seems an artistically logical successor to Women in Love, as it takes up the old Laurentian theme of achieving fullness of being on the high road of love. Like most of the characters of the later novels, however, the characters of Lady Chatterley are essentially abstractions.

Mark Schorer's one sentence summary of the book will recall its basic plot: "Constance Chatterley, the frustrated wife of an aristocratic mine owner who has been wounded in the war and left paralyzed and impotent, is drawn to his gamekeeper, the misanthropic son of a miner, becomes pregnant by him, and hopes at the end of the book to be able to divorce her husband and leave her class for a life with the other man."<sup>11</sup> It soon becomes evident that this book is an almost allegorical dramatization of mechanical vs. organic being (a conflict we have already seen in Women in Love): Clifford Chatterley, the intellectual, paralyzed industrial magnate, is locked in mortal combat with Mellors, the anti-intellectual, pastoral gamekeeper. The prize is Lady Chatterley herself, and an implicit metaphysical victory. Everything in the novel is

polarized; Wragby Hall and the cottage in the forest are like centers of opposite, warring worlds. The hollow poetry of the Hall contrasts with the rich, vulgar language of the wood; the intellectual discussions of sex in the manor are pale substitutes for the nights of passion at Mellors' cottage. The love ethic of Sons and Lovers is recalled by the use of flowers as a center of value: while Mellors lovingly entwines forget-me-nots in Connie's maidenhair, Clifford grotesquely smashes forget-me-nots and bluebells beneath his mechanical wheelchair. The novel seems almost a catalog of Lawrentian themes and recalls the Adamic tradition in the American novel with which Lawrence was so taken in his Studies in Classic American Literature: the machine in the garden, Eden invaded by industry, the westering myth are all blatantly present in Lawrence's last novel. And yet, if the novel is more in the American thematic tradition than in the British, it is more in the Spenserian allegorical tradition than in either. Lady Chatterley's Lover is a highly schematized moral fable of conflict between stereotyped characters representing good (Mellors) and evil (Clifford). This either/or dichotomization of value leaves us with an unreal world, a world without shading or ambiguity, and herein seems to lie the principle weakness of the novel. Whatever we conceive the novelistic genre to be, it is not simply allegory.<sup>12</sup>

Mellors and Clifford seem only to define limits of being; they become personifications, abstractions, ideas which we can know but cannot feel. Clifford is, as Barbara Hardy puts it, "an assembly of symbolic parts . . . presented in an entirely unsympathetic way."<sup>13</sup> Mellors is merely the other side of the metaphysical coin: a conceptual collection of symbolic qualities with which the novelist feels sympathy. There is no human ambiguity in the characterization, as there was in Gerald Critch and Rupert Birkin, for example; there is only good or evil, love or hate. There is no "quick." Therefore, however much the work succeeds as a moral fable of the "whole man alive" vs. the machine, it does not quite succeed as a novel because, as Lawrence has himself told us, we expect more from the novel than moral disputation.

What I am trying to emphasize is that the failure of these novels is at least partly, if not primarily, a failure of character. The central characters either quick-step to the tune of a politico-spiritual theory (as Aaron, Kate, and Don Ramon do), or they are suspended immobile between two theories (as Somers is). The characters are never able to affect the theory or the action by their own presence or being; they never rise above abstraction themselves. This is the direction, moreover, that Lawrence's art has been moving in all along. The journey from Sons and Lovers to Women in Love might roughly parallel the

movement in English literature from Thomas Hardy to Aldous Huxley. Lawrence seems to move naturally in his art from storytelling to metaphysics; the kind of art demonstrated in an early short story like "Odor of Chrysanthemums" is replaced by the abstract-symbolistic tone and manner of a late story like "The Man Who Died." It is not without significance that when Alfred Knopf first published The Plumed Serpent, it was listed under Lawrence's novels; "then," as Harry T. Moore tells us, "recognizing its generic difficulties, Knopf later classified it officially as belles-lettres."<sup>14</sup>

It is, perhaps, ironic that Lawrence saw through all literary pretension, even his own. If we turn again to the Study of Thomas Hardy, we will see Lawrence unwittingly describing the future of his own art:

It is the novelists and dramatists who have the hardest task in reconciling their metaphysic, their theory of being and knowing, with their living sense of being. Because a novel is a microcosm, and because man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory, therefore every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic. But the metaphysic must always subserve the artistic purpose beyond the artist's conscious aim. Otherwise the novel becomes a treatise.

And the danger is, that a man shall make himself a metaphysic to excuse or cover his own faults or failure. Indeed, a sense of fault or failure is the usual cause of a man's making himself a metaphysic, to justify himself.

Then, having made himself a metaphysic of self-justification, or a metaphysic of self-denial, the novelist proceeds to apply the world to this, instead of applying this to the world (Ph 479).

Lawrence goes on in this context to charge that "Tolstoi is a flagrant example of this," and while that is true, there is probably no greater instance of "the novelist [who] proceeds to apply the world" to a theory than Lawrence himself. Somehow, in the last decade of his life, Lawrence was unable to infuse his characters with the life, the "quickness" that he knew was always at the heart of the artistic novel. As late as 1925, in Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine, he writes of that indescribable magic by which literature endows a character with life:

And if one tries to find out wherein the quickness of the quick lies, it is in a certain weird relationship between that which is quick and -- I don't know; perhaps all the rest of things. It seems to consist in an odd sort of fluid, changing, grotesque or beautiful relatedness. That silly iron stove somehow belongs. Whereas this thin-shanked table doesn't belong. It is a mere disconnected lump, like a cut-off finger.

And now we see the great, great merits of the novel. It can't exist without being "quick." The ordinary unquick novel, even if it be a best seller, disappears into absolute nothingness, the dead burying their dead with surprising speed. For even the dead like to be tickled. But the next minute, they've forgotten both the tickling and the tickler.

Secondly, the novel contains no didactic absolute. All that is quick, and all that is said and done by the quick, is in some

way godly. So that Vronsky's taking Anna Karenina we must count godly, since it is quick. And that Prince in Resurrection, following the convict girl, we must count dead. The convict train is quick and alive. But that would-be-expiatory Prince is as dead as lumber.

The novel itself lays down these laws for us, and we spend our time evading them. The man in the novel must be "quick". And this means one thing, among a host of unknown meaning: it means he must have a quick relatedness to all the other things in the novel: snow, bed-bugs, sunshine, the phallus, trains, silk-hats, cats, sorrow, people, food, diphtheria, fuchsias, stars, ideas, God, tooth-paste, lightening, and toilet-paper. He must be in quick relation to all these things. What he says and does must be relative to them all.<sup>15</sup>

Lawrence is right about the novel, in spite of himself and the novels he was writing at the time.

The characters of the later novels probably suffer most from the overwhelmingly difficult task Lawrence had set for himself at the end of the Study of Thomas Hardy:

There shall be the art which recognizes and utters his [man's] own law; there shall be the art which recognizes his own and also the law of woman, his neighbour, utters the glad embraces and the struggle between them, and the submission of one; there shall be the art which knows the struggle between the two conflicting laws, and knows the final reconciliation, where both are equal, two-in-one, complete. This is the supreme art, which yet remains to be done. Some men have attempted it, and left us the results of efforts. But it remains to be fully done (Ph 515-516).

With The Rainbow as his Old Testament (Law), and Women in Love representing the New Testament (Love), the later novels

seem to be an attempt to construct the "supreme art" of "final reconciliation," a reconciliation which would encompass the home, the community, the nation and the world. The rainbow which ends the novel of law symbolizes the promise of the Old Covenant; the apocalyptic dénouement of Women in Love reflects the structure of the New Testament. The novels which follow offer programs for building a New World -- a new era which is due now that the time is full.

For Lawrence, the horrors of the first World War were quite literal images and signs of apocalypse. The 1920s were in fact (thought Lawrence) the "dies irae," the last days of the old epoch. Man must either remake himself and his world or die. Not content to sit by and describe such critical times, Lawrence tried to redirect them. The result was that the novels became treatises and the characters became abstractions. The supreme art was never written, the final reconciliation never made. The solution (or metaphysic), rather than the art, became supreme.

Perhaps, in light of his great difficulties, particularly his sexual problems (with his parents, his wife, his fear of his own homosexuality, and so on), Lawrence's remarks in the Hardy study explain his own substitution of axiom for art in the later novels:

And the danger is, that a man shall make himself a metaphysic to excuse or cover his own faults or failure. Indeed, a sense of fault or failure is the usual cause of a man's making himself a metaphysic, to justify himself (Ph 479).

It is unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable, that the insights at which Lawrence arrived in the Study of Thomas Hardy were forgotten in his later work. Few writers have ever known so much about the novel, or so little about themselves.

NOTES

CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>Leavis, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. The central essay using this biographical approach is Harry T. Moore's "The Plumed Serpent: Vision and Language," D. H. Lawrence, ed. Mark Spilka (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 61-71. See also Armin Arnold, D. H. Lawrence and America (London: The Linden Press, 1958); Eliot Fay, Lorenzo in Search of the Sun (New York: Bookman Associates, Inc., 1953); Mary Freeman, D. H. Lawrence: A Basic Study of His Ideas (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1955); L. D. Clark, Dark Night of the Body: D. H. Lawrence's "The Plumed Serpent" (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1964); and James C. Cowan, D. H. Lawrence's American Journey (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970).

<sup>3</sup>It is obvious that this central precept of "new" criticism has been slow to achieve dominance in Lawrentian scholarship. This is, I think, understandable when one considers the kind of novels Lawrence wrote. The open-ended form, the great amount of metaphysical and quasi-metaphysical discussion, and the quite noticeable absence of technical precision in all the novels is certainly a great barrier to the critic who prefers "autonomous" art.

<sup>4</sup>Vivas, p. ix.

<sup>5</sup>D. H. Lawrence (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), p. 88.

<sup>6</sup>The Art of D. H. Lawrence (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), p. 102.

<sup>7</sup>The Forked Flame, p. 211.

<sup>8</sup>See Leavis, pp. 38-39; Vivas, pp. 37, 39, 46, 51, 69; Draper, pp. 95-96; Hough, pp. 94-95, 112, 137; and Cavitch, p. 182.

The Lost Girl has been labelled "a pot-boiler," and is generally ignored by the critics. The best discussion of this work is found in Julian Moynahan's The Deed of Life, pp. 121-39.

<sup>9</sup>In Lawrence's letter to Bertrand Russell (dated July 26, 1915), for example, we can easily discern the entire outline of both Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo. Russell says that Lawrence "had developed the whole philosophy of Fascism even before the politicians had thought of it" (The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968], II, 12). "I don't believe," Lawrence wrote, "in democratic control":

I think the working man is fit to elect governors or overseers for his immediate circumstances, but for no more. You must utterly revise the electorate. The working man shall elect superiors for the things that concern him immediately, no more. From the other classes, as they rise, shall be elected the higher governors. The thing must culminate in one real head, as every organic thing must -- no foolish republics with foolish presidents, but an elected King, something like Julius Caesar. And as the men elect and govern the industrial side of life, so the women must elect and govern the domestic side. And there must be a rising rank of women governors, as of men, culminating in a woman Dictator, of equal authority with the supreme Man. It isn't bosh, but rational sense. The whole thing must be living. Above all there must be no democratic control -- that is the worst of all. There must be an elected aristocracy.

(D. H. Lawrence's Letters to Bertrand Russell, ed. Harry T. Moore [New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1948], p. 54).

<sup>10</sup>Hough, p. 137. For a full discussion of the one-dimension characters of Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo and The Plumbed Serpent, see Vivas, pp. 22-35, 37-59, and 67-72, respectively.

<sup>11</sup>"Introduction" to Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York: Grove Press, 1957), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>At least, not the kind of allegory Lawrence writes. His narrow notion of allegory is revealed by a passage from the first pages of Apocalypse (1932): "I hated, even as a child, allegory: people having the names of mere qualities, like this somebody on a white horse, called 'Faithful and True'.... A man is more than mere Faithfulness and Truth.... Though as a young man I almost loved Spenser and his Faerie Queene, I had to gulp at his allegory." Lawrence fails to transcend this limited idea of allegory in his own Lady Chatterley. Another way to describe the failure of Lady Chatterley is to say, with Frank Kermode, that Lawrence sacrifices "presence to type" in his use of allegorical images ("Spenser and the Allegorists," Proceedings of the British Academy, 48 [1962], 278).

<sup>13</sup>The Appropriate Form, p. 167.

<sup>14</sup>"The Plumbed Serpent: Vision and Language," p. 61.

<sup>15</sup>Collected in Phoenix II, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 420.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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